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SPEECHES

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM HUSKISSON.

VOL. III.

THE

SPEECHES

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM HUSKISSON;

WITH A

BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR,

SUPPLIED TO THE EDITOR

FROM

AUTHENTIC SOURCES.

"When he first devoted himself to the Public Service, he considered how he should "render himself fit for it; and this he did by endeavouring to discover what it was that "gave this country the rank it holds in the world. He found that its prosperity and dignity "arose principally, if not solely, from two sources; its Constitution and Commerce. Both "these he spared no study to understand, and no endeavour to support."

Mr. Burke's Speech at Bristol, in 1774.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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II. Discours prononcé par M. Huskisson, Anglois et Membre de la Société de 1789, à la Séance de cette Société, le 29 Août 1790.

III. Speech at the Liverpool Election, February 14, 1823.

IV. Speech at the Public Dinner, given to him, in the Council Chamber, Chichester, the 3d of April 1823.

V. Speech at the Public Meeting, held at Freemason's Hall, on the 18th June 1824, for erecting a Monument to the late James Watt.

IV. Speech at Liverpool, on his Re-election, February 5, 1828.

SPEECHES

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM HUSKISSON,

&c. &c.

EXPOSITION OF THE STATE OF THE NAVIGATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

May 12, 1826.

A Petition from the Ship Owners of North Shields having been presented to the House, on the 27th of April, complaining of the Alterations recently made in the Navigation Laws, Mr. Huskisson took occasion to give notice, that he would, on an early day, enter into an Exposition of the present State of the Navigation of the United Kingdom. Accordingly, this day,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose, and spoke, in substance, as follows:—

Sir:—In the course of the last session of Parliament, the honourable member for Grampound * frequently took occasion to indulge himself in certain oracular denunciations, foreboding the ruin of this country, as the result of the Commercial and Foreign Policy of the Government. At that period, the commerce of the country, it must be allowed, was at least sufficiently active, and the demand for mercantile Shipping greater, perhaps, than had ever before occurred. Whether from these circumstances, or from the solemn tone of mystery in which the honourable member's

* Mr. Robertson.

denunciations were delivered, they did not, at the time, make any considerable impression, either in this House, or out of doors.

Recently, however, a variety of Petitions have been presented to Parliament, from persons connected with the Port of London, and with several other commercial towns, expressing their apprehensions, that the Shipping Interest is in a state of decay, and that the foundations of the prosperity and security of the country are, in consequence, likely to be undermined. When such impressions have been created in quarters, where the authority of the Petitioners, so far as their observations go, is entitled to the greatest consideration, I trust that no apology will be requisite, for claiming the attention of the House—or at least of that portion of it, who are now present—to a subject of such vital importance to the maritime power and greatness of the country. I am well aware of the reluctance which honourable gentlemen must feel to a statement, from its nature, necessarily dry and tedious; but, I am also aware, that the matter involved in it is of too much importance not to demand the deepest attention; for, if the fears expressed in the petitions on the table of the House be well founded, it is scarcely necessary for me to say that the sooner an inquiry takes place the better.

The House, Sir, is aware, that our Navigation Laws have a two-fold object. First, to create and maintain in this country a great commercial Marine; and secondly (an object not less important in the eyes of statesmen), to prevent any one other nation from engrossing too large a portion of the navigation of the rest of the world.

Acting upon this system, the general rule of our policy has been to limit, as much as possible, the right of importing the productions of foreign countries into this country, either to ships of the producing country, or to British ships.

There certainly have been exceptions to this general rule, but it is the broad principle upon which the navigation system of this country was founded; and it is obvious, that the motives for adopting that system were, first, that such portion of the carrying trade of foreign countries as does not devolve to British shipping should be divided, as equally as possible, amongst the other maritime states, and not engrossed by any one of them in particular; and secondly, that countries entertaining relations of commerce with this country, and not possessing shipping of their own, should export their produce to England in British ships only, instead of employing the vessels of any third power.

But, when I state that the first object of our Navigation System was to create and uphold a great commercial marine, I think I may add, without fear of contradiction, that that object could not have been effected solely by regulations, restrictions, or prohibitions, however judiciously devised. The only true and durable foundation of a large commercial marine is to be laid in the means of affording to it beneficial employment. Without such employment, without, in short, extensive commerce, and great capital, to sustain and invigorate that commerce, no laws, merely protective, will avail. Whatever, therefore, contributes to extend the general commerce of the country must, incidentally, I may almost say directly, contribute also to improve and extend its navigation. These two great elements of our power and wealth are, of necessity, closely and intimately connected. I do not mean to say that their interests are always identified. I know they are not so. I know full well, that every thing which interferes with the freedom of commerce is more or less disadvantageous to the capitals which are employed in it. I am ready to admit, as consistent with this general principle, that the regulations of our Navigation System, however salutary they may

be, must, more or less, act as a restraint on that freedom of commercial pursuit, which it is desirable should be open to those who have capital to employ. I am, however, at the same time, bound to say, that those regulations are founded on the first and paramount law of every state, the highest ground of political necessity, the necessity of providing for our own safety and defence; the necessity of being prepared to afford security to our numerous colonial possessions scattered throughout all the seas of the world; the necessity of protecting the different branches of our widely spread commerce, against all the risks attendant on a state of war; and, lastly, the necessity of preserving our ascendancy on the ocean, and thereby sustaining the high station in the rank of nations, which that ascendancy, more than any other circumstance, has given to this country.

Entertaining these opinions, I am as ready as any man can possibly be, to say that it is our duty, on all occasions, to look to the peculiar nature of this State necessity;—and that, whenever the interests of commerce and navigation cannot be reconciled, the feeling which ought to be uppermost in our minds should be,—(I, Sir, have no hesitation in stating it to be my feeling)—that the interests of Commerce, in all such instances, ought to give way, and those of navigation to have the preference.

I trust that I have, in this brief statement, now placed myself fairly before the House. And, if the measures, recently adopted by his Majesty's Government, have laid this country open to the danger, with which, according to some, it is threatened, certainly I have imposed on myself no light task, in attempting to vindicate and defend those measures.

I begin with laying it down as a general position, that, in looking to the interest of the Ship-owner, we ought not to cramp commerce beyond the degree which state neces-

sity requires for the protection of our navigation. I say that, apart from the considerations upon which the Navigation Laws were founded, we are bound not to depress one branch of industry, in order to give undue encouragement to another.

The questions, therefore, which we have to consider, are these—

First; whether the Alterations which have been made in the system of our Navigation Laws have, or have not, exposed the great public interests, for the support of which that system was established, to jeopardy and hazard?

Secondly; whether those alterations are such as to have placed any particular branches of the Shipping interest of the country in a situation of difficulty, such as to entitle them to specific consideration?

Thirdly; whether, in the alterations which have been adopted, his Majesty's Government have been actuated by a mere gratuitous desire to make experiments, and to try the effect of innovation; or whether those alterations, even if attended with some inconvenience to particular interests, were not called for by circumstances, in order to obviate greater inconvenience, which might have arisen to the general interest, if we had rigidly persisted in the course which we formerly pursued?

Now, Sir, before I join issue with those who call in question the necessity or expediency of the alterations which have been made in the system of our navigation laws, the House will, perhaps, permit me shortly to recall to their recollection the principal outlines of that system; —a course which is necessary, in order to mark more distinctly the alterations which have been made in it.

The Great Charter of the Navigation System of this country is the act of the twelfth of Charles the Second. The different modes which that act provided for the en-

couragement of shipping, may be arranged under the *five* following heads:—

First, the *Fisheries*. The ocean is a common field, alike open to all the people of the earth. Its productions belong to no particular nation. It was, therefore, our interest to take care that so much of those productions as might be wanted for the consumption of Great Britain, should be exclusively procured by British industry, and imported in British ships. This is so simple and reasonable a rule, that, in this part of our navigation system, no alteration whatever has been made; nor do I believe that any will ever be contemplated.

The *second* object which the Navigation Laws had in view was to give, to the shipping of this country, employment in what is called the *Coasting Trade*. When those laws were first passed, that trade was confined to England only, but, since we have become legislatively united with Scotland and with Ireland, it has embraced the whole of the British Islands. In this important part of our policy also there appears to be no motive for alteration. I shall, therefore, dismiss it with a single observation. The law, in this respect, remains unchanged, and will remain unchanged, so long as we have a desire to maintain a great commercial marine.

The *third* object of our Navigation System was the *European Trade*. The rule laid down, with regard to that trade, was—that the ships of the other states of Europe were to be at liberty to bring, from any port in Europe, any article of European production, with the exception of certain articles, since known in trade by the name of the "enumerated articles." They amount in number to twenty-eight, and include those commodities which, being of the most bulky nature, employ the greatest quantity of shipping. With respect to these "enumerated

articles," the exception was this—that they should not be brought to our ports in any other than British ships, or ships of the country in which they were produced, proceeding directly from such country to this. This was the general state of the law, in respect to European Commerce, from the time of its enactment, in the twelfth of Charles the Second, down to a recent period. Its provisions, however, were more rigorous and exclusive towards Holland and the Low Countries. The regulations of that period were not framed merely for the preservation and encouragement of our own commerce, but also to weaken the powerful marine of Holland. Guided by this policy, our ancestors applied more severe measures towards the Dutch, than they thought necessary towards any other nation. In this spirit it was that they prohibited the importation, generally, of the productions of the other countries of Europe from Holland; instead of confining that prohibition to the twenty-eight enumerated articles.

The *fourth* object of our Navigation System was to regulate our *commerce with Asia, Africa, and America.* The rule of law on this head was, that no article, the produce of either of those three quarters of the globe, should be allowed to be brought into an English port, except in a British ship.

The *fifth* and last part of the System of our Navigation Laws related to our *Colonies.* The principle on which we acted towards those Colonies was strictly to confine them, in all matters of trade, to an intercourse with the Mother Country. They were not allowed to dispose of any of their produce, otherwise than by sending it in British vessels to this country. They were equally restricted from receiving any articles necessary for their consumption, except from this country, and in British bottoms.

This, I apprehend, is a fair summary of the main points

of encouragement to the Shipping Interest of Great Britain, and of repression of the shipping of other states, aimed at by our Navigation laws, as those laws existed from the twelfth of Charles the Second down to the year 1783. In mentioning this latter period, I advert to it now as the commencement of that mighty change in the state of the world, the foundation of which had been then laid in the progress, and unfortunate issue, of the American war. But, before I state what that change has been, so far as relates to Navigation and Commerce, I shall, perhaps, be permitted briefly to notice some of the circumstances which had prepared the way for this calamitous contest:—the result of which, as I shall shew presently, rendered the revision of our navigation system a matter no longer of choice but of necessity;—a result, which, in its consequences, in less than half a century, has dragged after it nearly the whole colonial system of the Old World.

Sir, the war which began in the year 1756, commonly called the Seven Years' War, was, strictly speaking, so far as relates to this country and to the Bourbon governments of France and Spain, a war for colonial privileges, colonial claims, and colonial ascendancy. In the course of that war, British skill and British valour placed in the hands of this country Quebec and the Havannah. By the capture of these fortresses, Great Britain became mistress of the colonial destinies of the Western world. What use we made of our successes in that quarter, I will not now stop to inquire.

But if the proceedings of the Government of this country, after the peace of 1763, be closely examined, we shall find, that many of the causes which, ten years afterwards, led to the unfortunate rupture with our then colonies, now the United States of America, may be traced to our unseasonable attempts to enforce, in their most rigid and exclusive

application, our Colonial and Navigation System. Every complaint, every petition, every remonstrance, against the oppressive tendency, and vexatious consequences, of that system, on the part of the inhabitants of New England,—every temperate effort made by them to obtain some slight relaxation of the trammels that shackled their disposition to engage in commercial enterprize,—were only met, on the part of the British Government, by a constant succession of new laws, enforcing still more restrictive regulations, framed in a spirit of still more vexatious interference. One instance of the character of that legislation will be sufficient; and I give it, as a slight specimen of the commercial jealousy which prevailed in our Councils, in reference both to the colonies and to Ireland.

A ship from our American possessions, laden with their produce, was stranded on the coast of Ireland. It will naturally be supposed, that the cargo was landed, and the ship repaired, in that country. No such thing. The law compelled the owners to send another English ship from England, for the purpose of bringing away the cargo:—a cargo which, not improbably, might then be wanted in the Irish market, and which was, perhaps, destined to be ultimately consumed there, after having been trans-shipped in a port of that country, landed in an English port, and again re-shipped to Ireland.

This is a sample of the real grievances under which our American colonies laboured. Such a state of law could not fail to engender great dissatisfaction, and much heart-burning. It is generally believed, that the attempt to tax our American colonies, without their consent, was the sole cause of the separation of those Colonies from the mother country. But, if the whole history of the period between the year 1763 and the year 1773 be attentively examined, it will, I think, be abundantly evident, that, however the

attempt at taxation may have contributed somewhat to hasten the explosion, the train had been long laid, in the severe and exasperating efforts of this country, to enforce, with inopportune and increasing vigour, the strictest and most annoying regulations of our Colonial and Navigation Code. Every petty adventure in which the colonists embarked, was viewed, by the merchants of this country, and the Board of Trade of that day, as an encroachment on the commercial monopoly of Great Britain. The professional subtlety of Lawyers, and the practical ingenuity of Custom-house Officers, were constantly at work, in ministering to the jealous, but mistaken views of our sea-ports. Blind to the consequences elsewhere, they persevered in their attempts to put down the spirit of commercial enterprize in the people of New England, until those attempts roused a very different spirit;—that spirit which ventured to look for political independence from the issue of a successful rebellion.

The result is well known. The country found itself engaged in a civil war. That war, in its progress, involved us in the greatest difficulty and embarrassment. It was terminated by submitting to humiliations such as, I trust to God, the Crown of Great Britain will never again be exposed to.

America was not the only part of our dominions in which we were called to pay the penalty of humiliation. Ireland, towards which we had acted in the same spirit of commercial jealousy as towards our American colonies, took advantage of our difficulties, and refused any longer to hold her industry and trade subject to our system of exclusion. To the Parliament and Volunteers of Ireland, we had also to capitulate. If the capitulation was mortifying to the pride of England, fortunately it neither compromised our honour, nor involved any concession beyond what was

strictly a debt of justice to Ireland. The benefits of our Commercial and Navigation System were extended to her. She was permitted to trade direct to the Colonies, and placed rather upon the footing of a partner than that of a dependent, in the concerns of the British empire.

If I have gone into this detail, I have done so, because it appeared to me necessary, as bearing, in a peculiar manner, upon the question now before the House. The immediate lesson which I draw from it is this,—that it is a part of political wisdom, when danger is foreseen, not supinely to wait for its approach, but, as far as possible, to take timely measures for its prevention.

The peace with America gave the first great blow to the Navigation System of this country. There had now arisen an independent state in the New World. Our colonies had fought for, and had taken, a station in the rank of nations. They had now interests in navigation to attend to, and a commerce of their own to protect. It therefore became imperative on this country, unless we were prepared to relinquish all trade with America, to conform to circumstances. It was impossible for us, in this new state of things, to enforce the system of our Navigation Laws, which, until then, we had so rigidly insisted upon. That part of the system which provided, that none of the productions of Asia, Africa, or America, should be imported into England, except in British vessels, could no longer be adhered to.

After the peace of 1783, and before the General Congress of America had established that system of government, under which the people of the United States now live, —a work which was not completed until the year 1787,— each of the different States, then composing the Union, was at liberty to act independently of the others, in matters relating to its trade with foreign countries. Accordingly, almost every State established a different rule of commercial

intercourse with this country. The general character, however, of their legislation, was conceived in a spirit of peculiar hostility (not unnatural, perhaps, so soon after the exasperation excited by civil discord) against trade with Great Britain. In some of those states, indeed, British merchants were prohibited from trading with them altogether; in others, heavier duties were specifically imposed upon British merchandize; and in all, a desire was manifested to give a decided preference to the goods of other countries.

This state of things continued until the year 1787, when the General Congress met, and one uniform system of commercial policy was laid down. By that system, a heavy blow was aimed at the Navigation of this country. It was resolved, that all foreign ships, trading to America, should pay half a dollar, which was afterwards raised to a dollar, per ton duty, beyond what was paid by national ships. And further, that goods imported in foreign vessels should pay a duty of ten per cent., over and above what was demandable on the same description of goods imported in American vessels.

This system,—in the adoption of which, the Americans had, in a considerable degree, followed the example of their English ancestors,—was likely to become seriously prejudicial to the commerce and navigation of this country. The proper authorities, therefore, set about considering what was to be done in order to counteract it. The Board of Trade had recourse, for advice, to the most eminent merchants and practical men; and various projects were started on the occasion. One plan proposed to give a bounty on all goods exported to America in British ships. Another, to impose a duty on all articles carried out of this country in American ships. A third, to retaliate upon the Americans, and, following their example, to lay

a specific duty on American ships, and on goods imported in those ships. These and various other plans, having the same object in view, on being sifted and examined, were found to be open to insuperable objections. It was shewn that, without attaining their object, they would prove injurious to the commerce and manufactures of this country; and all of them were, in consequence, abandoned.

After this inquiry, and a long struggle to counteract the Navigation System of America, without in any degree relaxing our own, this country found it necessary to adopt the system of Reciprocity, on which, since the year 1815, the commercial intercourse between the two countries has been placed; namely, equality of all charges upon the ships belonging to either country in the ports of the other, and a like equality of duty upon all articles the production of the one country, imported into the other, whether such importation be made in the ships of the one or the other. In the practical consequences of this arrangement, our adherence to another part of our navigation laws, instead of serving, appears to me to have shackled the shipping interest of this country. Our law still provides that goods, the produce of Asia, Africa, or America, shall not be imported in foreign ships, unless they be the ships of the country of which the goods are the produce. The Americans retaliate this restriction by applying it to all goods the produce of Europe. An American ship trading to this country has, in consequence, a great advantage over a British ship trading to America. The American vessel, on her voyage to England, is freighted with a cargo wholly produced in the United States. She has nothing else to bring here. For her return to America she may load in the ports of this country with a cargo, partly the produce or manufacture of Great Britain, and partly of any other country. The British ship is debarred

from this advantage. Her cargo, when trading to the United States, must be exclusively of British origin. For instance, an American vessel, at the port of Liverpool, may take nine-tenths of her cargo, in articles the produce of Lancashire, and the remainder may be made up of brandies, wines, or the produce of any other part of the world, to be procured at Liverpool. But, if an English ship, proceeding to the United States, were to take a single cask of brandy, or a single pipe of wine, she would be liable to seizure and forfeiture. Is it not, therefore, fairly to be presumed, that a further relaxation of our System, to the extent of allowing the importation, from the United States, of goods, the produce of any part of the world, in American shipping, on condition of the like privilege being granted to British ships in the ports of the United States,—however departing from the policy of our ancestors,—would be rather an advantage than an injury to the shipping interest?

Shortly after the commercial legislation of the United States had assumed, in 1787, a regular shape, and an uniform character, the war of the French Revolution broke out; a war which lasted nearly a quarter of a century. The course of this war was marked by so many strange and anomalous circumstances, both by land and upon the ocean;—so large a portion of the continent of Europe, including nearly all its trading and maritime communities, became subjected to the despotism of one great military power;—that despotism was exerted in so extraordinary a manner to crush maritime commerce;—that it would be vain to enter upon the history of our Navigation System, or of that of other countries, during this long contest. It is, however, certain that the commerce of the United States of America, which were the

only, at least almost the only, neutral power that could trade in safety, was greatly benefited by the war. It is equally true, that Great Britain, being well able to protect her commercial marine, in consequence of her vast naval superiority, did extend that commercial marine, in spite of all difficulties, whilst that of the other countries of Europe was greatly reduced. It is unnecessary for me, as the facts are so well known, to dwell further on the circumstances of that war. We may, therefore, as far as relates to the present question, pass over the period between 1792 and 1815.

At the latter period, peace being restored, and with it the independence of the states which had been incorporated with France, the commerce of the world began to revert to its ancient channels. The nations of Europe, whose flags had, for so long a series of years, disappeared from the ocean, were now naturally anxious that their own trade should be carried on in their own ships. This gave a check to the shipping of the United States, which was also felt by the shipping of this country. Perhaps in a greater degree by our own shipping, in consequence of the restitution of several extensive and valuable colonies, which we had captured and held during the war.

Besides this material circumstance, there were others, to which I will briefly advert, which had a natural and inevitable tendency to interfere with, and diminish, the employment for shipping in this country.

The first to which I shall allude is the Abolition of the Slave Trade. They who are old enough to remember—and I am one of the number,—the early debates which took place on this subject will recollect, that the arguments in opposition to the measure were grounded chiefly on the danger with which it threatened the Shipping Interests of the country. The necessity of kidnapping

cargoes of slaves on the coast of Africa was, at that time, as coolly defended, on the score of encouragement to our marine, as the taking of cod-fish on the Banks of Newfoundland could be at the present day. That traffic was, however, abolished in 1806; and, happy I am, that the interests of humanity, and the honour of the English name, were, from that year, no longer sacrificed to the plea of the shipping interest; though I may, I think, fairly adduce the abolition of the slave trade as having taken away one source of employment.

After the general pacification of Europe, but before we dismantled our fleet, we insisted on the powers of Barbary desisting from the practices of maritime warfare, carried on by cruizers under their flags, in the Mediterranean. These corsairs were constantly taking prisoners, either for the sake of ransom, or for the purpose of carrying them into slavery. Whilst this system was tolerated, scarcely any trading vessels, those of Great Britain excepted, could navigate that sea in safety. In this state of things, it was highly honourable to this country to have used her naval power,—the dread of which had constantly ensured respect for her own flag,—for the purpose of procuring an equal degree of security for the navigation of all christian states. This was no positive duty which we were bound to perform. We were not called upon by any international engagement, nor by any moral obligation, as in the case of the slave trade. The act was one of spontaneous generosity. But, however high-minded in principle, it is not the less true that the result of our interference was injurious to the shipping interest of this country, in the Mediterranean. Since the bombardment of Algiers, the flag of every petty state, bordering on that sea, floats in equal security with our own. I am not accurately informed what was the quantity of British shipping employed in the carrying and coasting

trade of those states before this change, but I have heard it stated, in this House, by one likely to be well informed,—the late Mr. Marryatt,—that from eight to ten thousand British seamen, and from seven to eight hundred British vessels, were engaged in that commerce. Consequently, to that extent has the employment for British ships been diminished in the Mediterranean.

But these were not the only circumstances, at the close of the late war, which had a tendency to reduce the amount of our Shipping. With the termination of hostilities, there was necessarily a diminished demand for ships in the public service. The greatest proportion of those which had been taken up as hired transports was discharged. I have obtained a statement of their number and tonnage, as they stood at the termination of the war—and of the number and tonnage of those employed at the present period. The diminution is not less than 1,226 vessels, amounting to 270,382 tons.

In the next place, we had to sell out of the King's service a number of vessels, which were no longer wanted in the navy. I do not advert to ships of the line, or to frigates of the large class, which are always sold, subject to the condition, that they shall be broken up. Of this latter description of ships I take no notice; but confine my statement to vessels of smaller burthen, adapted to other purposes than those of war, and which are consequently not required to be so broken up. Of this class, there has been sold no less a number than three hundred and thirty-three, the amount of their tonnage being 93,530 tons. So that, if we add to the number of transports discharged the number of ships sold, we shall find that his Majesty's Government have set free, to compete with the commercial marine of the country, 1,559 vessels, amounting in tonnage to 363,912 tons; a quantity nearly equal to one-fourth of

the whole shipping of the country, as it stood in the year 1793, at the commencement of the late war.

But this is not all. If the difference of circumstances under which trade is carried on, in time of peace and in time of war, be taken into consideration, we shall find that, in the former period, a much smaller number of vessels is required for the same extent of transactions, than in the latter. In time of peace, the moment a ship has landed her cargo, she is at liberty to sail again, and is despatched on another voyage as soon as possible. During the last war, we were obliged, in almost all cases, to place our merchant ships under the protection of convoy; and, in spite of all the exertions of the Admiralty, it was frequently difficult to provide convoys, as expeditiously as the interests of commerce would have required. Four or five hundred merchantmen were sometimes collected together at one point, before the required protection could be afforded to them. And when, at length, these large bodies of shipping did proceed to sea, they were under the necessity of keeping together; so that the rate of sailing, during a whole voyage, was necessarily to be regulated by the progress of the slowest sailing vessel. In time of peace it is otherwise. Ships can then traverse the ocean singly, without fear of interruption; and in their passage from one port to another, as well as in loading and unloading, every exertion is used to ensure despatch. An instance occurred lately, at Liverpool, of a large West-Indiaman arriving from Barbadoes, landing her cargo, and sailing again for that island, in the course of one week. The multiplication and convenience of docks have also greatly contributed to obviate delay in the discharge and loading of vessels. Upon the whole, I shall not be overstating the proportion when I say that two-thirds of the number of vessels, necessary in time of war, are fully sufficient for all the

purposes of the same extent of commerce, in time of peace.

There is yet another circumstance to which, before I quit this part of the subject, I must refer. I mean the alteration made in the year 1815, in the foreign Corn trade of the country. During the war, this trade afforded regular employment to no inconsiderable quantity of shipping, but since the law has been altered, and the ports have been generally shut against the importation of foreign corn, that employment has ceased. In a desultory intercourse, like that which alone can exist under the present law, the opening of the ports being sudden, and, in most cases, uncertain, till the quarterly average is declared, it is almost impossible that the trade, when permitted, should not fall into the hands of the foreign ship-owner. The period for which the ports may continue open being limited to a few weeks, the persons who wish to take advantage of that opening, instead of fitting out ships in our ports, send their orders to the continent, with directions to forward the corn by any vessels that can be procured on the spot. Hence the almost exclusive employment of foreign shipping in this occasional trade.

I must now crave the indulgence of the House while I shew what was the situation of this country, with regard to its Shipping, previous to the last war. In 1792, one of the most prosperous years which the country has ever known,—the year immediately preceding the breaking out of that war, in which we were called upon to make such immense efforts to maintain our naval superiority—the number of registered ships in the several ports of the British empire was 16,079; the amount of their tonnage 1,540,145 tons. In the present year, that is to say, in the year ended the 31st of December 1825, the number of registered ships was 24,174; and the amount of their ton-

nage 2,542,216 tons; shewing an increase of one-third in the number of ships, and of two-fifths in the tonnage, within that period.

Having stated the number and tonnage of our registered vessels at the commencement of the late war, I will now shew what they were at its close. In 1815, the number was 24,860, and the amount of their tonnage 2,681,276 tons. It appears, therefore, that there has been, since the conclusion of the war, a decrease in our shipping of 686 vessels, and 139,060 tons; but I have, I think, shewn satisfactorily that, upon the return of peace in 1815, our commercial marine was greatly in excess of what was requisite, in the then altered situation of the country.

As connected with this part of our inquiry, it is material to ascertain the number of vessels that have been built in the British dominions, since the termination of the late war, and to compare it with the number built in former periods. It is with much satisfaction that I find myself enabled to assure the House that, taking the last thirty-seven years, the number of ships annually built in Great Britain, instead of decreasing, has increased. The documents which prove the correctness of this statement are already upon the table of the House, with the exception of those for the year 1812, which, in consequence of the calamitous fire at the Custom-House in that year, could not be procured.

From the returns which I hold in my hand, I find that the number of ships built, last year, in the several ports of the British dominions, exceeded the number built in any one year of the whole period to which I have referred. In the year 1814, when the war with France first terminated, the number of ships built was 818; the amount of their tonnage 95,976 tons. Last year, the number of ships built was 1,312; the amount of their tonnage 171,827 tons.*

* Parl. Papers, Session 1826, v. xxii. n. 398.

So that, in fact, the tonnage of the ships built last year was little short of double the tonnage of those built in the year 1814, and exceeded considerably that of any year upon record.

These details, however dry in themselves, appear to me to involve the elements of the whole question, and to afford the best criterion by which a judgment can be formed, how far the complaints which represent our shipping to have been in a state of rapid decline are well-founded. The only other comparison, growing out of the documents which I hold in my hand, is that of the number of ships which have entered inwards, and cleared outwards, to and from the ports of Great Britain, in the several years since the alterations which are objected to in our Navigation Laws.

I have provided myself with a return exhibiting this comparison, from the year 1814 down to the last year; and I intreat the House to bear in mind that the complaint, in the petition on the table, is that in consequence of the alteration made in the Navigation Laws within the last three or four years, the employment of British Shipping has *decreased*, and that of foreign vessels trading with this country has *increased*. I will confine the comparison to the returns of vessels, British and Foreign, entering *inwards*; and for this reason—that it is not necessary for ships, leaving our ports in ballast, to clear out at all, and therefore the returns exhibiting the number of vessels cleared *outwards* must be very imperfect.

I find that, in the year ended the 25th of December 1824, the number of British vessels that entered inwards was 19,164, and the amount of their tonnage 2,364,249 tons. The number of foreign vessels that entered inwards, during the same year, was 5,280, the amount of their tonnage being 694,880 tons. In the year ended 25th December 1825,—a year in which the modifications made in

our Navigation Laws were in full operation;—the number of British vessels that entered inwards was 21,786; the amount of their tonnage 2,786,844 tons. The number of foreign vessels that entered inwards in that year had increased to 6,561, and the amount of their tonnage to 892,601 tons. The year 1825 was, it is well known, a year of unexampled speculation in every branch of commerce, creating an unusual demand for shipping, not only in the ports of this country, but throughout Europe. And what, as regards British Shipping, was the result? Why, that the positive increase of British vessels entered inwards, as compared with the year 1824, was 2,622; and of tonnage 422,595 tons; while the increase of Foreign vessels entered inwards, during the same year, was in number 1,281; and in tonnage 197,721 tons.* This at least is no unsatisfactory result. The increased employment of British shipping alone in that year exceeds the aggregate increase of employment to the shipping of all other nations of the world.

But as the attention of the House has been specially referred, by the Petitioners, to the state of the trade between this country and the northern parts of Europe, and more especially to the trade with Prussia, I must beg leave to enter rather more specifically into that part of their case. I am happy to be able to state, upon the authority of documents which will be laid on the table of the House, that by a comparison between the British and Prussian Shipping engaged in the trade between the two countries, during the years 1824 and 1825, the increase of British was much greater than that of Prussian Shipping in the latter year. The number of British ships trading to the ports of Prussia in the year 1824, was 470; in the year 1825, 942; being more than double the number of the preceding year. The

* Parl. Papers, Session 1826, v. xxii. n. 398.

number of Prussian ships which came to this country, in the year 1824, was 682; in 1825, the number was 887; being an increase of about one-fourth.

Such, Sir, if any inference is to be deduced from the trade between Prussia and Great Britain for the last year, is the comparative growth of British and Prussian Navigation. I am aware that the danger of losing our carrying trade, from the ports of the Baltic, has been the main source of the jealousy felt by the Shipping Interest, and of their complaints to this House. The comparison between British and Prussian shipping for the two or three last years, and especially that of the year 1825, has certainly not borne out their predictions, or justified their alarms. But it would be uncandid to deny, that we have not yet sufficient experience to warrant a positive conclusion that, prospectively, the Shipping of the Prussian ports may not gain ground in the competition with our own. I am the more induced to make this remark, as, from the excessive excitement, and over-trading of the last year, I am ready to acknowledge that, taken by itself, it cannot be considered as affording an estimate for the future: neither on the other hand, perhaps, will it be fair, in 1827, to form such an estimate from the experience of the present year, which it is much to be feared, as a natural consequence of the late excess, will be one of severe depression in the trade of this country.

Having adverted to the apprehensions which are entertained respecting our Trade with the ports of the Baltic, I have naturally been most anxious to sift to the bottom this important part of our inquiry. I know no mode so satisfactory of ascertaining what have been the fluctuations in the trade, either as respects our own share of it, at different periods, or the proportion which that share bears to the trade of other Powers with the ports of the Baltic, as a reference to the annual Returns of the vessels, of all nations,

which have passed the Sound in a given number of years. Fortunately the State Paper Office has furnished me with these returns. This account I hold in my hand, from the year 1783 to the year 1792, with the exception of the year 1789; the returns for which year have been either lost or mislaid. I also hold in my hand a similar account, from the year 1816 to the year 1825, both inclusive.* The comparison of these two periods, each of ten years, (both periods of peace) appears to me to afford a fair illustration of this branch of trade. I am happy to say that the result will be found highly satisfactory; for it will be seen that the number of British ships which passed the Sound in the year 1825, was not only positively greater than it was in any one of the twenty years to which I have referred, but that its proportion, with respect to the number of vessels from all other nations, was equally favourable to this country. It would be going into an unnecessary detail to give the numbers for every year of the twenty; I shall, therefore, confine myself to the five last years. The total number of ships which passed the Sound was:—

	British Ships.	Ships of all other Nations.
In the year 1821	2,819	6,358
Do. 1822	3,097	5,386
Do. 1823	3,016	6,187
Do. 1824	3,540	6,978
Do. 1825	5,186	7,974

So that, looking at the proportion which Great Britain has been able to retain of the Trade of the Baltic, it appears that, last year, when the total number of vessels which passed the Sound exceeded that of any former year, British Shipping engrossed considerably more than one-third of the whole navigation of that sea, and had increased very nearly two-fifths, compared with the average of the four preceding

* Parl. Papers, 1826, v. xxii. n. 380.

years. The papers to which I have referred I propose to move for, so that the House will be able to judge from them of the correctness of my statement.

In consequence of the restoration of peace, the demand for shipping, as I have already remarked, was much diminished, and the rates of freight were considerably lowered after the year 1815. This gave rise to great complaints on the part of the Shipping Interest. In the hope of finding some remedy for their difficulties, the House, in the year 1820, appointed a Select Committee to inquire into the state of our Foreign Commerce. My right honourable friend, the Master of the Mint,* now absent, I am sorry to say, from indisposition, presided over the labours of that committee, and prosecuted the inquiry, in several succeeding sessions, with a degree of zeal, diligence, and ability, for which the country is greatly indebted to my right honourable friend. One change recommended by that committee, in the Navigation Laws, was to the following effect:—that whereas certain goods, which I have already described as known in trade under the designation of "*enumerated articles*," could only be imported in British ships, or in ships of the country in Europe of which they were the produce, and directly from that country, it was the opinion of the committee that the law ought to be so far relaxed, as to allow the importation of these articles in the ships of any country into which they had been previously imported.

The recommendation of the Committee was adopted by the legislature. That this relaxation has been beneficial to our Commerce and Navigation is now, I believe, placed beyond all doubt. It afforded a great facility to the execution of another project, emanating from the same

* The right honourable Thomas Wallace; the present Lord Wallace.

Committee, and since also carried into effect;—that of establishing a general system of Warehousing, so as to make this country a place of entrepôt for all foreign commodities. It was obviously impossible to give full scope to this system, unless we were prepared to allow greater latitude to the admission of foreign goods. The superior capital and credit of this country afford inducements to send those goods here, and their being deposited in British warehouses gives a facility to the British Merchant and Ship-owner to supply the demand for them in other parts of the world, through the medium of British adventure and British shipping, instead of their being sent directly to those parts in foreign shipping, from the countries of Europe in which such goods are produced.

It was desirable, therefore, for the interest of our Foreign trade, that we should no longer rigidly adhere to that part of the Navigation Act which prohibited the importation of the "enumerated articles," if brought from countries other than those of which they were the produce. Such a restraint, it is hardly necessary to say, could not fail frequently to prevent speculations of trade, in which the spirit of British enterprize would have otherwise engaged, or to throw those speculations into other channels. It interfered, likewise, to prevent the advantageous assortment of cargoes, and other commercial arrangements, as well in foreign ports as in the ports of this country; and, in this and many other ways, contributed, directly and indirectly, to diminish the employment for British shipping.

Another alteration in our Navigation System has since been adopted, which certainly ought not to have been so long delayed. This alteration consists in putting the trade between Great Britain and Ireland upon the footing of a Coasting trade. Every gentleman must, I think, see that, from the time at least of the union of the two coun-

tries, it was desirable that their interests and commercial system should be identified as much as possible. From that period it was absurd to consider the commercial intercourse with Ireland as a part of our foreign trade, and to subject the shipping employed in it to the restrictive regulations and higher charges of that trade.

But these were not the only deviations from the ancient rules of our Navigation System. The revolutions which have occurred in the political state of the world, in our time, rendered other changes indispensable. There has grown up over the whole continent of America, a situation of affairs similar to that which the United States presented, after their separation from the mother country. This change, from a colonial to an independent existence, necessarily draws after it, in each particular case, the application of the new rule, which, as I have already stated, unavoidably grew out of the independence of the United States.

The first application of that rule occurred in respect to Brazil. From the moment when, in 1808, the house of Braganza transferred the seat of empire to Brazil, that country virtually ceased to be a colony. Great Britain had no choice but to apply the European principles to the commerce and navigation of Brazil, though out of Europe, and to admit Portuguese shipping,—and, since the separation of Portugal and Brazil, Brazilian shipping,—coming from that country into our ports, upon the same footing as the ships of any other independent nation.

This principle has been extended, from time to time, as new States have risen up in America. When I heard the honourable member for Grampound complain that, in our Treaty of Commerce and Navigation with Columbia, and in that with Buenos Ayres, we had consented to place their navigation upon an equality with our own, I certainly listened to this charge with no small degree of

surprise, being satisfied that what the honourable gentleman censured so severely, was the very wisest principle that this country could adopt. Those states were anxious to encourage their commercial marine, by granting exclusive advantages to their own shipping, and imposing certain restrictions upon that of this country. This disposition was frequently manifested by the Ministers of those States in the course of our discussions with them; and certainly there are not wanting some who are constantly endeavouring to excite in these new countries a jealousy of the Naval Power of Great Britain; instigating them to adopt a separate and novel code of maritime law for the New World, and to frame their Navigation System upon principles of giving a preference to their own shipping, and to that of America generally, over the shipping of this country, and of Europe.

Have we acquiesced in these views? Have we compromised any of the acknowledged principles of Maritime Law? No, Sir—Whilst we have explicitly refused to listen to any such compromise, we have disarmed all suspicion as to our commercial pretensions, by frankly declaring, that we sought no exclusive advantages for British ships or British trade, and that the principle of our intercourse with the New States, as with the Old States, of the World, would be that of a fair and equal reciprocity.

This brings me to the *gravamen* of the charge made against his Majesty's Government; namely, the step taken by them, in furtherance of this principle, by the introduction of a law, enabling the Crown, with the advice of the Privy Council, to remit all discriminating duties on the goods and shipping of such countries, as may agree to impose no higher charges or duties upon British ships, and the goods imported therein, than upon their own ships, and the like goods imported in such ships.

If the system of discriminating Duties for the encouragement of Shipping, were a secret known to this country alone; if a similar system were not, or could not be, put in force in every other country, I should not be standing here to vindicate the measure to which I have just referred, and the present policy of his Majesty's Government. So long as, in fact, no independent trading community existed out of Europe, and so long as the old Governments of Europe looked upon these matters,—if they looked to them at all,—as little deserving their attention, and were content, either from ignorance or indifference, not to thwart our System, it would have been wrong to disturb any part of it. But is this the present state of the world? Did not the United States of America, in the first instance, for the purpose of raising to themselves a great commercial Marine, and of counteracting our Navigation Laws, adopt, in their utmost rigour, the rules of those laws, and carry, even further than we had ever done, in respect to foreign Ships, this principle of discriminating duties against our Shipping? Can we shut our eyes to the fact that other nations have followed, or are following, their example? Do we not see them, one after the other, taking a leaf out of our own book? Is not every Government in Europe, if possessed of sea-ports, now using its utmost endeavours to force a trade, and to raise up for itself a commercial Marine? Have we not boasted of our Navigation Laws, till we have taught other nations to believe (however erroneous that belief), that they are almost the only requisite, or, at least, the *sine quâ non*, of commercial wealth and of maritime power? Did these vauntings excite no envy, no spirit of rivalry, no countervailing opposition in other countries? Did the success of the United States of America create no desire in those countries to follow her example?

It would be worse than idle, it would be dangerous, to dissemble to ourselves the great changes which have been wrought, since the establishment of American independence, in the views and sentiments of Europe, upon all matters connected with commerce and navigation. They now occupy a leading share in the attention of almost every Government. They are everywhere a subject of general inquiry and interest. Even in countries, of which the institutions are least favourable to the discussion of political topics, these questions are freely discussed, and, by discussion, the influence of public opinion is made to bear upon the measures and policy of their Governments.

In this altered state of the world, it became our duty seriously to inquire, whether a system of commercial hostility, of which the ultimate tendency is mutual prohibition, —whether a system of high discriminating duties upon foreign ships, with the moral certainty of seeing those duties fully retaliated upon our own Shipping, in the ports of foreign countries,—was a contest in which England was likely to gain, and out of which, if persevered in, she was likely to come with dignity or advantage? I will lay aside, for the moment, every consideration of a higher nature, moral or political, which would naturally lead us to look with some repugnance to the engaging in such a contest. I will equally lay aside all consideration for the interest of our manufacturers, and for the general well-being of our population, who, as consumers, would obviously have to pay for this system of Custom-house warfare, and reciprocal restriction; and I will view the question solely in reference to the shipping interest. In this comparatively narrow, but, I admit, not unimportant, view of the question, I have no difficulty in stating my conviction,—a conviction at which I have arrived after much anxious consideration,— that, in the long-run, this war of Discriminating Duties, if

persevered in on both sides, must operate most to the injury of the country which, at the time of entering upon it, possesses the greatest commercial marine. How can it be otherwise? What are these discriminating duties, but a tax upon commerce and navigation? Will not the heaviest share of that tax fall, therefore, upon those who have the greatest amount of shipping and of trade?

Before we embark in such a contest, we owe to the character of the country, as well as to its interests, to satisfy ourselves;—first, that it is necessary for its welfare; and,—secondly, that once committed to the trial with all the commercial powers of Europe, the country would have the firmness and fortitude necessary to go through with it. Do not let gentlemen too hastily decide this last point in the affirmative. Let them call to their recollection the famous Orders in Council;—let them, above all, bear in mind, that we have yet had but one trial of this discriminating warfare,—the trial with the United States of America,—and that we came out of that trial, after several years' perseverance, by conceding the very object, for the maintenance of which it had been carried on. Would it be politic, or dignified, to engage in a like struggle in Europe, with the risk of arriving at the same result? In commerce, in navigation, in naval power, and maritime pretensions, the United States are our most formidable rival; and we are now arraigned for not withholding from Prussia and Denmark, what parliament and the country, ten years ago, concurred in yielding to America.

Under what circumstances did England found her Navigation System? When her commercial marine was, comparatively, insignificant, her wealth inconsiderable, before manufactures were established, and when she exported corn, wool, and other raw materials. When, on the other hand, Holland and the Netherlands were rich, possessed of great

manufactures, and of the largest portion of the carrying trade of Europe and the world. What has followed? The commercial marine of the latter countries has dwindled away, and that of Great Britain is now immense. But, in the progress of the change, England is become the great seat of manufactures and trading wealth, frequently importing, and never exporting, corn; drawing raw materials from, and sending out manufactured goods to, all parts of the world. This was our state, though in a far less degree than at present, when America became independent. She started by applying towards us the system, which we had applied towards Holland. She was then poor, with a very small commercial marine, without manufactures, having corn and raw materials to export;—and we know what her shipping now is. Let Gentlemen reflect on these circumstances, before they decide that it is necessarily wise to enter upon a similar contest with other poor and unmanufacturing countries. Let them seriously consider, whether a system of discriminating duties,—now that the exclusive *patent* by which we held that system is expired,—is not the expedient of such a country as I have described, rather than the resource of one which already possesses the largest commercial marine in the world. They will then see, that it may possibly be a wise policy to divert such countries from that system, rather than to goad them on, or even leave them a pretext for going into it.

Let us for a moment, however, suppose that, at all hazards, we have embarked in this warfare of Counteracting Duties. They who recommend this policy have no right to assume that, in the progress of the struggle, the discriminating duties imposed in the foreign country (Prussia, for example) on British shipping, will not be, at least, equivalent to the like duties levied in England on Prussian shipping. The United States did not content themselves

with equivalency,—they went more boldly to work;—so might any European power. If equivalent duties be established on both sides, how will they operate? It is clear that the shipping of each country will stand in the same relative situation to that of the other, as if no such duties had been imposed; the duties, therefore, in both countries will be a tax, and a very objectionable one, upon the interchange of their respective productions. But, as those productions are different, these duties will affect differently the industry of the contending parties. Our principal exports to the North of Europe are manufactured goods and colonial produce;—our imports, timber, hemp, flax, pitch, tar (occasionally corn), and other raw materials. The former must be sold dearer in the foreign country,—the latter in this country,—by all the amount of the tax. What is this in the foreign country, but a premium against our manufactures, in favour of the rival manufactures of other states, or of the importing state itself;—and in this country, but a tax upon raw materials requisite for carrying on our own manufactures? A ship, for instance, is a manufactured article, and, to encourage our shipping, here is an additional tax upon the raw materials of that manufacture! Our cotton goods, our woollen stuffs, barely maintain a competition with those of other countries, and here is an additional tax on their importation into those countries, to turn the scale against us! Our West-India planters complain of the low price of their productions, and we provoke an additional tax, which tends to shut them altogether out of the foreign market! If the end of this warfare should be, as, pushed to the extreme, it might be, that each country should export its own productions, in its own ships, and no country import the productions of another, in the ships of that other, which would be the greatest loser, the coun-

try manufacturing, or the country producing the raw materials?

I will not even glance at the effect of all this strife upon the consumers, that is, upon the bulk of the population; because I know that, in certain quarters, I shall be taxed with theory, if I stand up for the general interest of the community, against the pretensions of a particular class, when the interest of that class is supposed to be at stake. Indeed, I have no doubt I shall be told by some practical men, that all this is theory, to which they have a short answer. That answer is, "We do not want any thing from the Baltic. We have plenty of timber, &c. in Canada, all of which would be brought home in British Shipping; and, therefore, the powers of the Baltic must submit to our discriminating duties, without retaliation, or be content to lose our trade." I really know not how to reason with such logicians. I believe the Baltic can do to the full as well without us, as we can do without the Baltic. We import quite as much timber from Canada as can be used for the purposes for which that timber is fit. For other, and more important purposes, we want timber of better and more durable qualities.

Looking to the Shipping Interests of this country, and to the interests of Canada, I am not one of those who think we have done too much for those interests, in the great preference, in point of duty, which we have given to the Canada timber, and in the consequent sacrifices which we make to encourage the importation of that timber, inferior as it is; but I must say, at the same time, that the great annual increase of the importation from our North American possessions, under the present duty, shows that the proportion which it bears to the Baltic duty has not been settled to the disadvantage of the shipping employed in the

Canada trade. Were it necessary, however, to make an option between a contest of discriminating duties with Prussia in the timber trade, or a further reduction of the duty on Canada timber, for the greater encouragement of our shipping, I certainly should prefer the latter measure, as the least injurious of the two to all the other interests of this country.

For the reasons which I have now stated, his Majesty's Government have thought it more prudent and more dignified to enter into amicable arrangements with other powers, founded on the basis of mutual interest, and entire reciprocity of advantages, rather than embark in a contest of commercial hostility and reciprocal exclusion;—a system, at best, of doubtful benefit to the Shipping Interest;—involving the certainty of great injury to all the other important interests of the country; and which would, at last, place Parliament and the Government in the painful alternative, either of turning a deaf ear to the complaints of the many who would suffer from the contest,—or of terminating it, as other contests of a like nature have been terminated, by concession, bringing with it not only immediate humiliation, but other consequences which do not end with the concession itself.

But it is asserted, that we should not have been compelled to make our choice between these alternatives. Whilst I entreat the House to bear in mind the circumstances which I have already stated, in respect to the general feeling which prevails in the maritime countries of Europe, and in America, I must now call their attention to the steps which had been actually taken by Prussia (the first power, after the United States, with which we entered into a treaty upon this subject), before the negociation of that treaty was entertained by his Majesty's Government.

I hold, Sir, in my hand a Report, made on the 6th of

August 1822, by the British Consul at Dantzic, also Reports of the Vice-Consuls at Konigsberg and Memel, to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I will not trouble the House with reading the whole of these dispatches, but I request their particular attention to the following extracts:—

Extract of a Despatch from Mr. Consul Gibson, dated Dantzic, the 6th August 1822.

"My Lord:—I do myself the honour to transmit to your Lordship a translation of the Order of Cabinet (which I have only now been able to procure) respecting an increase of the Government Port Charges in the Prussian Ports, on vessels belonging to countries between which and Prussia no reciprocity has been fixed by treaty, or which do not otherwise treat Prussian ships and their cargoes as advantageously as their own. Prussia has made arrangements with Holland, Denmark, and America, for establishing a reciprocity in this respect, and the present regulation has evidently for object to induce other countries, *particularly Britain*, to enter into a similar arrangement.

"At present Prussian, Dutch, Danish and American ships pay, as public port charges here, about 46½ common groshes, or about 17⅞*d.* sterling, per last of 4,000 lb. (about 4,140 lb. English), or about 1⅛ tons British measurement; while British and other vessels pay about 77⅞ common groshes, or about 29⅞*d.* sterling per last, making 8¾*d.* sterling per ton measurement more. The advance that is to take place will make, as it will be payable in gold at a losing valuation, *viz.*

On ships coming in with a full cargo of goods, about...	58	Pence sterling per ton measurement.
Do. with a quarter of a cargo or less	29	
Do. going out with a full cargo	29	
Do. with a quarter of a cargo or less	14½	

"Thus vessels arriving even in ballast, and taking a cargo back, will in future be burthened with about 37¾*d.* sterling per ton measurement more government port charges than Prussian ships; which however is not quite so great an advantage to the latter as British vessels have over Prussian in Britain, by paying lower port charges, light money, &c. and less duty on the cargo, if of timber for instance, which gives the chief employment to Prussian ships.

"The Prussian government make this new port-charge regulation professedly from the interest created by the situation of their ship-owners, who are indeed all going to ruin."

Cabinet Order of the 20th June 1822, *for the Encouragement of Home Shippings.*

"In consideration of the unfavourable state of the shipping of this country for several years past, and in consequence of the representations made to me, founded on divers consultations, that the unfavourable state of things operates the more injuriously on the said trade, as the principles always observed here, of imposing moderate burthens on foreign ships frequenting Prussian ports, and of levying the same duties on goods imported or exported, whether in foreign or in native ships, are not adopted in several foreign ports frequented by Prussian ships; I have resolved, so long as these relations subsist, so detrimental to the maintenance of this important branch of domestic trade, to grant the said trade greater advantages than it has hitherto enjoyed; I therefore do ordain,

"*First.* That the coasting trade from one Prussian port to another shall be considered, exclusively, a branch of domestic trade, and shall be carried on solely by Prussian vessels, under pain of ship and property being confiscated, upon any foreign ship-master being detected in it. Exceptions can only be allowed in very urgent cases, and only for the public good, by the provincial authorities.

"*Secondly.* An increase of the hitherto existing harbour dues shall take place in all Prussian ports, on foreign ships with cargoes, incoming or out-going; but the same shall not be applicable to the ships of those nations:—

"*a.* With which Prussia has treaties, placing her ships and their cargoes on an equal footing with the native ships, or with those of the most favoured nations, in conformity with the stipulations therein made."

"*b.* Which from other causes treat Prussian ships, with their cargoes, the same as native vessels with theirs.

"With this restriction shall the increase take place, according to the following rates:—

"*a.* On in-coming ships...R. 2 per last of 4,000 lbs.

"*b.* On out-going ditto..... 1 ..... ditto.

"*c.* On ships that have only one-fourth of a cargo, or less, one-half of the above; say,

"In-coming..... 1 — out-going..... ½.

"Ships in ballast are not subject to the increased imposts.

"The proceeds of this impost shall not be considered as an additional source of revenue to the state; but shall be applied for the benefit of the ship-owners, accordingly as you, the Minister of Commerce, shall propose to me.

"*Thirdly.* In order to present, as far as is in the power of the state, a real source of profit to the ship-owners, the conveyance of such goods as may be for account of the government, shall be effected, in preference, by native ships, regarding which I refer to my particular order of this day.

"The first and third of the foregoing enactments shall be put in force immediately; but the second point only in three months after publication of this order, which is to be made through the collection of laws, and according to which the needful is to be decreed.

(Signed) "FREDERICK WILHELM."

Extract of a Despatch from Vice-Consul Tuke, dated Konigsberg, 22d August 1822.

"Sir:—I beg leave to draw the attention of your Excellency to several new laws and regulations of the Prussian government, which are highly detrimental to the British trade, and respecting which numerous complaints have been made to me by the merchants and ship-masters interested in the trade between this country and Great Britain.

"By the last tariff, a duty of one guilder per hundred-weight is imposed on all flax, hemp, and tow, shipped in foreign vessels. This is probably intended as a measure of retaliation for the difference of import duty charged in Great Britain between goods arriving in British and foreign vessels. This law has obliged several British ships this summer to load flax at the low rate of thirty shillings per ton, instead of fifty shillings, which they would have got, had not the merchants been obliged to pay twenty florins per ton export duty, because the goods were shipped in a British vessel. As hemp and flax are, now that the corn trade no longer exists, the principal articles of export from hence, this duty bears exceedingly hard on British vessels.

"According to a Cabinet Order, dated Berlin, 20th June 1822, intended for the encouragement of Prussian shipping, the king has been pleased to direct a duty of three dollars per last to be charged on all foreign vessels arriving with cargoes after the expiration of three months. This tax is so important in its consequences as to de-

mand immediate attention, for a moderate sized vessel will, by this order, be compelled to pay three hundred dollars in addition to the existing heavy charges, which will entirely prevent our vessels from enjoying the carrying trade from home to this country."

Extract of a Despatch from Vice-Consul Fowler, dated Memel, 21st August 1822.

"This difference between British and Prussian shipping" (*i. e.* the difference established by the Decree of 20th of June), "must drive the carrying trade in British bottoms from this port, to the great injury of the British shipping interest; for about three hundred British vessels, on an average, load here annually with timber for Great Britain, which of course cannot bear such heavy charges as cargoes consisting of grain, flax, hemp, tallow, &c. &c., and which are of so much more considerable value. The merchants here, who are principally British, have protested against this new regulation, and petitioned the Prussian government for the repeal thereof."

From what I have now read, the House will at once understand the nature of the measures adopted by the Prussian Government, in the year 1822, and the motives which influenced them in that proceeding. What was the consequence of these measures? Why, that, in the next year, 1823, the Board of Trade, and other departments of the government, were assailed with representations from all quarters, connected with the shipping and trade of the country, against the heavy charges imposed upon British ships in the ports of Prussia. In such circumstances, what course did his Majesty's Government take? We felt it to be our duty, in the first instance, to communicate with the Prussian minister in this country: and our minister at Berlin was, I believe, also directed to confer with the Prussian Government on the subject. I myself had a conference with the Prussian minister at this court, and I well recollect the substance of his reply to me; "You have," he said, "set us the example, by your port and light charges, and your discriminating duties on

Prussian ships; and we have not gone beyond the limits of that example. Hitherto, we have confined the increase of our port and tonnage charges to ships only; but it is the intention of my Government next year" (and of this he shewed me the written proof), "to imitate you still more closely, by imposing discriminating duties on the goods imported in your ships. Our object is a just protection to our own navigation; and so long as the measure of our protection does not exceed that which is afforded in your ports to British ships, we cannot see with what reason you can complain."

Against such a reply, what remonstrance could we, in fairness, make to the Prussian Government? We might have addressed ourselves, it may be said by some, to the friendly feelings of that government;—we might have pleaded long usage in support of our discriminating duties;—we might have urged the advantages which Prussia derived from her trade with England. Appeals like these were not forgotten in the discussion, but they were of little avail against the fact stated by Mr. Consul Gibson—that "the Prussian ship-owners were all going to ruin."

By others it may be said, "your duty was to retaliate, by increasing your own port charges, and discriminating duties, on Prussian shipping." I have already stated generally my reasons against the policy of this latter course. We were not prepared to begin a system of commercial hostility, which, if followed up on both sides to its legitimate consequences, could only tend to reciprocal prohibition. In this state of things, more prudently, as I contend, we entered upon an amicable negociation with the Prussian Government, upon the principle of our treaty with the United States,—that of abolishing, on both sides, all discriminating duties on the ships and goods of the respective countries in the ports of the other.

Having concluded an arrangement with Prussia upon this basis, we soon found it necessary to do the same with some other of the Northern States. Similar conventions were accordingly entered into with Denmark and Sweden. Reciprocity is the foundation of all those conventions; but it is only fair to add, that they contain other stipulations for giving facility to trade, and from which the commerce of this country, I am confident, will, in the result, derive considerable advantage.

When his Majesty's Government had successively made the concession of these discriminating duties to the United States, to Prussia, to Denmark, and to Sweden, I should have been ashamed of the Councils of this country, if we had hesitated to enter into a similar agreement with the free Hanseatic towns of Hamburgh, Bremen, and Lubeck. These little States, I admit, had imposed no discriminating duties upon our ships, though they had the power to do so. But would it have been worthy of the character of this great country, consistent with its justice, or honourable to its generosity, to continue to levy, upon the trade and shipping of these ports, duties which were no longer paid by the subjects of more powerful States;—to have made their forbearance the plea for our exaction, or to have waited to do an act of justice until they had deprived us of that plea?

In our treatment of these free towns, this country ought not altogether to forget that, amidst the barbarous ignorance, and habitual violence, of the feudal ages, those little Republics were the refuge of commerce, and the nurseries of civilization. They were the sanctuaries, in which the arts and pursuits, most conducive to the enjoyments and improvement of mankind, were respected, amidst the scenes of bloodshed, rapine, and insecurity, by which they were too often surrounded. With these recollections, I shall,

perhaps, be excused if I express my regret, that several of the little trading communities on the Continent have ceased to be free and independent. In point of policy, it has always appeared to me that the incorporation of these communities with the military monarchies of the Continent, was not the most satisfactory part of the late settlement of Europe. This incorporation was, probably, more the inevitable consequence of the general derangement of the war, than the legitimate result of the principles which prevailed at the restoration of peace. Were I disposed to illustrate the inconvenience of that incorporation, in reference to the present subject, I might, not inopportunely, refer to Dantzic. If, instead of passing under the dominion of an absolute monarchy, that town (formerly, I believe, one of the Hanseatic League) had continued free like Hamburgh, and had the Government of Prussia then said, —"You shall not trade with us, except on such and such conditions,"—our answer might have been, "the commodities which we want from your country we can procure at Dantzic, where no such conditions are imposed on British ships."

If we look at the present question as connected with our maritime strength, I contend that there can be little or no danger from the arrangements which I have now described. The states to which those arrangements extend, from their situation, and from many other circumstances, which it is not necessary for me to mention, never can become formidable as maritime powers;—they never can dispute with us the ascendancy on the ocean, nor have they an interest in assisting others to obtain that ascendancy. Their commercial interests, and regard to their own security, must alike incline them to our side.

In time of peace, it is well known, the policy of this country excludes, as much as possible, from our commercial

marine the natives of all foreign countries; but, in time of war, when our native seamen are required for the King's service, we are under the necessity of admitting volunteers from other countries to man our merchant-ships. The consequence is that, from our multiplied intercourse with those secondary states, their seamen, in time of war, tempted by higher wages and other advantages, assist in manning our merchant ships, and thereby afford us great facilities for carrying on our extensive commerce. On the restoration of peace, these volunteers are, most of them, forced to seek employment again in the merchantmen of their own countries; and their return thither contributes to give increased activity to the commercial marine of those countries.

If, therefore, by this system of extended reciprocity, a somewhat larger share of the carrying trade between Great Britain and these secondary states devolve to their shipping, in time of peace, so far as this participation is obtained at the expense of any diminished employment for our own shipping, we may regret the diminution: at the same time, if the circumstances which lead to it be unavoidable, it is some consolation to know, that the corresponding increase, elsewhere, is divided among those countries which cannot be dangerous, and are likely to be most useful to us, in time of war.

The Timber trade with Norway has, at all times, been carried on chiefly in the ships of that country. They are built for the purpose, in the cheapest manner, but so rudely constructed, as to be unfit for the conveyance of almost any other article. In respect to the Prussian timber ships, they are also of a construction very inferior to the shipping of this country, built for the purpose of general trade. We are told by most of the Petitioners, and figures are adduced to prove the statements, that they are sent to sea and navi-

gated at less than one-half of the expense of British ships. If it be so, the restoration of the discriminating duty, to the repeal of which these Petitioners attribute all their present difficulties, would be of little avail to protect them. That protection was 2*s*. 9*d*. upon a load of timber, being the difference between 57*s*. 9*d*., the duty in a foreign, and 55*s*., the duty in a British ship, exclusive of some difference on account of lower port charges, and light money, paid by the British ship. Against this advantage, therefore, in our ports, was to be set off the alien duty of 3*s*. 1¾*d*. a ton, imposed on British ships in the Prussian ports, whether with a cargo or in ballast. The balance, therefore, on our side would be next to nothing,—totally inadequate, upon the shewing of the petitioners, as protection; but just enough to excite irritation, and to afford a pretence for vexatious restrictions on British commerce, and on the introduction of British manufactures into the Prussian dominions. It has also been stated by some of the petitioners, that ship-building in this country is rendered more expensive by taxes on the materials, from which other countries are exempt. I am not aware that, in the petition from the Shipping Interest in the port of London, praying for a continuance of the discriminating duties, the Petitioners urge the direct taxation upon the materials employed in ship-building, as a ground of complaint. It has been alleged, that the Americans build their ships upon cheaper terms than we do. This I do not believe. Timber, I admit, is cheaper in the United States, but almost every other article employed in ship-building is as dear as, and several of them dearer than, in this country. Labour likewise is dearer, and the pay of the crew full as high as, if not higher than, in England.

After all, there is nothing new in the complaints now made of the increased employment of the Shipping of the

Northern powers, in their trade with this country. Similar complaints were made after the American war. In the year 1786, the ship-owners represented that our laws gave too great an advantage to foreign ships, and especially to the foreign ships employed in the importation of timber from the Baltic.

In consequence of this representation, the Board of Trade of that day entered upon an inquiry into the subject. Mr. Reeves, in his work on the Law of Shipping and Navigation, states, in reference to this inquiry, that—

"In the year 1786, it was observed, that the quantity of foreign ships employed in the importation of goods from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and the East country, was much greater in proportion to the British, than the foreign tonnage employed in other trades; and that it was increasing in general, and the British shipping employed in some of these trades was, at the same time, decreasing. A reference was made, in consequence, to the Board of Customs, to see whether it might not be proper to augment the duty, called the Alien's Duty, or petty custom, on such of the goods enumerated and described in the eighth and ninth sections of the Act of Navigation as were then subject to it, and were imported from the before-mentioned countries; and whether such increase would materially operate to increase the burthens on, and consequently the prices of, those articles, if such duty were increased gradually; that is, by making it double from the first of January 1787, and treble from the first of January 1788: and in case the Board of Customs should be of such opinion, then they were called upon to consider, whether some advantage might not be given to British-built ships employed in those trades, by lowering the duties on those articles when imported in such ships; or whether both these methods might not be pursued in such proportions as might best

attain the end proposed, and not materially affect the revenue."

As it does not appear that recourse was had to these expedients, it is to be inferred that, upon further consideration, it was found it would not be safe to risk the experiment. The Northern Powers had not then complained of our existing alien charges upon their shipping; they had taken no steps to countervail those charges in their ports; but did it follow that they would continue passive, if a question then at rest had been disturbed, by encreasing those charges in the manner suggested? In my opinion, to leave the question at rest, as long as possible, was the wisest policy for this country. It was the policy pursued until the matter was taken up, not by us, but by the United States of America, and in succession by other powers. In that state of things, and after the arrangements which we had entered into with those powers, acting upon the necessity of the case, I felt, in the course of the last session, that it would be better to make our laws upon this point square with our practice;—better, as one general rule,—first, to tender to all nations alike, and indiscriminately, equal facilities of commerce and navigation, and equal inducements to visit the ports of this country with their merchandize, either for our own consumption, or in the way of transit *(entrepôt)* to other parts of the world:—secondly, to abolish all discriminating duties affecting differently the like productions of foreign countries, and, in lieu thereof, to establish one uniform tariff for the whole:—and, thirdly, to reduce that tariff to the lowest degree, consistent in each particular article with the two legitimate objects of all duties,—either the collection of the necessary public revenue, or the protection requisite for the maintenance of our own internal industry. These are the principles according to which our new Book

of Rates has been formed, and the consolidation of our innumerable and, in many instances, inconsistent and contradictory Laws of Customs been affected.

A few observations on our Commercial Policy, with regard to our Colonies abroad, will bring me, I hope, to the conclusion of this important investigation. The former colonial system of this country was simply this, that our possessions abroad should receive all their supplies from hence in British shipping, and they were prohibited from trading directly with any other country. But so early as the year 1783,—the year in which we recognized the independence of the United States of America,—it occurred to the Government at home, that it might be somewhat hard to require of the West-India Colonies to draw all their supplies from the mother country. What, then, was the line adopted? Orders in Council allowing those colonies to trade directly with the United States of America in British Shipping, were passed, from time to time, as occasion required, and the Ministers, as often, came down to Parliament for Bills of Indemnity, for having so far violated the plantation laws.

In process of time, however, the Government of the United States, jealous of a trade in which British Shipping alone was employed, said to this country,—"If you want the productions of our country for the use of your colonies, and will not allow us to send them in our ships, we will entirely prohibit the exportation to your colonies, in British Shipping, of those articles of which your colonies stand in need." They did so. The British Government had then recourse to another expedient, in order to avert the threatened inconvenience, and at the same time to avoid any positive alteration of our Navigation Laws. A sort of open mart or fair was established at some half-way place between the coast of America and the West-Indies, to which

the ships of the United States came, and where, being met by our traders, the respective parties interchanged commodities, according to their mutual wants.

But the Government of the United States again interfered, and prohibited their ships from this trade. After a suspension of intercourse had continued for some time, Parliament, in the year 1822, passed an Act, by which American ships were allowed to trade directly between the United States and our colonies in the West-Indies and North America.

Now, let me ask, was it politic, was it altogether consistent with impartiality and our friendly relations with the North of Europe, to grant to the shipping of the United States, first, in the trade between them and this country, by the treaty of 1815; and, secondly in the trade, by this Act regularly legalized, between those states and our colonies, privileges, which we continued to deny to the shipping of Prussia, of Denmark, of Sweden, of Hamburgh, and of other trading communities of Europe? Upon what principle of fairness, upon what principle of sound policy, were we to continue this preference exclusively to a power, towards which, God knows, I entertain no feeling of hostility,—far from it;—but, when I am speaking of that nation in a British House of Commons, it is not improper to say, that in matters of navigation and naval power, there exists, towards us, a spirit of rivalry in the United States;—a spirit of which I do not complain, but which should incline every Englishman to doubt the wisdom of any measure, tending to encourage the growth of the commercial marine of America, by giving to it privileges greater than are permitted to the shipping of other states:—states less jealous of our maritime ascendancy in time of war, and, at all times, confining their views upon the ocean to the industrious employment of their sea-fearing people,

without looking to the ulterior object of, one day, disputing with us the dominion of that ocean.

Considering, therefore, the Act of 1822, and the changes which had taken place in the Colonial System of other Powers, it appeared to me, that the time was arrived when, upon every sound principle, it would be right to extend to the foreign shipping of Europe, the same privilege of trading with our colonies in the New World, which had been granted to the shipping of America; and also to give a greater facility and extension to the intercourse between foreign countries and our colonies generally;—strictly confining, however, to British shipping only all trade between this country and the colonies, and all inter-colonial trade between the different foreign possessions of the British empire.

Whether we look to the interests of our commerce, which are also the interests of our navigation;—whether we look to the separate interests of the colonies, or to the general interests of the parent country;—or whether we consider the changes which have recently taken place, especially in the New World;—all these considerations appear to me to concur in support of the measures to which I have referred, and the enlarged views of policy upon which they are founded.

Shipping, like other branches of business in this country, is liable to fluctuation. There may be great excitement at one period, and great depression at another. Last year, for instance, the demand far exceeded the means of the British ship-owners to supply it. The price of freight for foreign adventures was, in consequence, so much raised as to become a very serious injury and interruption to other branches of navigation, more especially to our Coasting trade. Yet, such was the unbridled rage for speculation which then prevailed, that our tonnage could not keep pace with it, and foreign vessels were taken up in every port

of Europe, not from a preference, but because British ships could not be procured. This is not the proper occasion to inquire into the origin of the almost universal mania, which appears to have seized upon merchants and manufacturers, not of this country only, but, more or less, upon those of other countries, during the last year. It is now too generally seen and admitted, even by those who were most infected by that mania, that their speculations were carried on without reference to the habitual scale of our consumption, or to the rapid accumulation of goods, or to any of those circumstances which, in their calmer moments, direct the operations of commercial men. When prices had risen, in the first instance, from natural causes perhaps, speculation soon forced a further and more rapid rise, and the only inference, for a time, among buyers, seems to have been, that it would continue progresssive, and almost indefinite.

Connecting this rage for speculation with the employment of Shipping, the House will be surprised to hear in what a degree the quantity of bulky articles from foreign countries, and from our possessions in North America, in the last year, exceeded the importations of former years. In the year 1822, the total importation of timber from foreign countries was 140,715 loads—in 1825, it amounted to not less than 301,548.

	1822.	1825.
Of flax	cwts. 607,143	1,042,956
Of tallow	do. 805,238	1,164,029
Of wool	lbs. 19,048,879	43,700,553
Of linseed	bush. 1,411,137	2,876,571
From British America.		
Of timber	loads, 345,741	467,565
Ashes	cwts. 135,983	210,781
Masts from all Parts of the World.		
Under twelve inches in diameter,	No. 14,484	19,016
Above do.	loads, 4,577	8,698*

* Parl. Papers, Session 1826, v. xxii. n. 374.

The result of all this overtrading of last year, of which I have selected only a few instances, is the depression which now prevails, the interruption of commercial credit, the great diminution of employment for manufacturing labour in this country, and the general derangement of business in the countries with which our principal interchange of commodities is carried on. I deplore this state of things, not the less, certainly, because it is not confined to this country: and in alluding to the sufferings of others, I do so, not as a source of consolation to ourselves, but as evidence, that this derangement is to be traced to some cause of more extensive effect than the municipal regulations of this country.

It would be matter of surprise if, amidst this almost universal stagnation of demand, the Shipping interest, which had fully participated in the extraordinary activity of the preceding period, should not partake of the languor by which it is now succeeded. In looking dispassionately at this or any other of the leading interests of this country, we must not draw our conclusions from extreme cases, either way. We must also recollect that shipping, in common with every other mode of employing capital and industry, when it seeks a foreign market, is liable to be affected by a competition with other countries, and by acts of foreign states, over which we can have no control. As far as exclusion is within our reach,—in the coasting trade, —in the fisheries,—in the trade between this country and our foreign possessions,—we grant a strict monopoly to the British ship-owner. It is our duty to maintain and enforce that monopoly, not for his special advantage, but for the public interest. It is further our duty to give him every legitimate countenance and protection in the trade of this country with other maritime countries; but if any branch of that trade is interfered with, either by new regulations in those countries, or by the erection of territories, once

colonies, into an independent state, however we may regret the circumstances, as affecting our ancient navigation system, it may not be in our power to overrule those circumstances.

In such a state of things, our policy must be, retaining the important principles of that system as much as possible, to adapt it to the change in our situation, and to the altered relation in which we stand to the parties with which we have to deal.

The first effect of such inevitable changes, either in navigation or trade, is, usually, more or less, to derange the interests upon which they immediately bear; but the temporary difficulty is generally overcome by the speedy opening of fresh channels of employment, and is soon merged in the increased enterprise which attracts capital and shipping to some other quarter. This was the case after the separation of the British Colonies in North America; and I hope for a similar issue on the present occasion.

We are all agreed that our Commercial Marine is the foundation of our naval power, and that the maintenance of that power is the paramount duty of those who administer the affairs of this country. In an enquiry like this, therefore, the most important question for the consideration of the House is, not the detail of each separate branch of trade in which our commercial marine was employed in any particular year, but its aggregate amount at this time, compared with the aggregate amount at some antecedent period.

Now, Sir, I have already stated what that amount was at the breaking out of the last war in 1793, and what it is at the present time. The comparison, taken by itself, certainly affords no ground for despondency or alarm. But, in making this comparison, in reference to our military marine, we are also to bear in mind, that in 1793, both the military and commercial marine of France and Spain were

much more numerous than they are at present. The navy of Spain, once so powerful, has dwindled almost to nothing; her merchant ships have nearly disappeared from the ocean. The navy of France is less numerous and less formidable than it was at the breaking out of the revolution, and her commercial shipping, though reviving since the peace, is probably, at this moment, not more than one-half of its amount in 1792. On the other hand, whether we look to the number of ships of war, to the means of manning those ships, to the general spirit which pervades every branch of the service, or to any other element of naval power, what a contrast between our situation at the close of the last and of the American war! Can we forget the period when the combined fleet of the House of Bourbon was master of the British Channel,—when a West-India convoy was obliged to assemble at Leith, and go north about, in order to escape capture by an enemy's fleet, within sight of our principal sea-ports? Can we forget when Gibraltar, blockaded by the united naval forces of those same powers, was relieved, as it were, by stealth?—when it was considered matter of just praise to the highly-distinguished officer who commanded the British fleet on that trying occasion, that in performing this service, he was able to elude the vigilance of a superior enemy, and to return to England, with out having risked a combat?

These are among the recollections which belong to the American war. How different from those which connect themselves with the war by which it was succeeded! That our sway on every part of the ocean was undisputed by the naval power, not of France and Spain only, but of all Europe, before the close of the last war, is matter of notoriety. In fact, the British navy was then occupied in the blockade of every naval arsenal of its enemies; and this, for the last years of the war, formed its principal employment in Europe.

When we began that war, in the course of which we achieved so many victories, our commercial marine was three-fifths of its present amount. Our seamen in the King's navy, 16,000, instead of 30,000, their present number. We had then no reserve of veteran seamen, receiving for former services an annual allowance from the State. We have now such a reserve, amounting to many thousands, all of whom are liable, upon an emergency, to be called upon by the Admiralty, and of whom a large proportion would, I have no doubt, be found as efficient as before their discharge. Our ships, likewise, are in a more complete state, and better prepared with all the means of speedy equipment, than at any former period of peace. Never, I will venture to affirm, was there a time when the country might rest with greater confidence and satisfaction on the sufficiency of its naval resources than at the present. But we are told, and I am ready to admit it, that if the naval resources of France and Spain have declined, a new and formidable power has grown up in the United States of America. I have already stated, that the maritime means of that country had, from peculiar circumstances, been considerably benefited during the late war, which lasted so long, and spread so generally through Europe. But, if the commercial marine of the United States increased during that period, our own advanced in a greater amount. Since the restoration of a general peace, the Shipping of both countries has rather decreased. The diminution in that of the United States has been stated at 168,000 tons, which I believe to be fully equal to any diminution that has occurred in this country. I am warranted, therefore, in concluding that, upon a comparison of our commercial marine with the commercial marine of other powers, we have no reason to apprehend any of the difficulties now which the Petitioners predict, and that our naval means are fully adequate to any possible

emergency which may compel us to call them into exertion.

If, Sir, I have trespassed too long upon the time of the House, my apology, I trust, will be found in the vital importance of the subject. The severe distress, under which the country now labours, is attributed, in some quarters, to the changes which have recently taken place in our Navigation System, and in our Commercial Policy. If any honourable members entertain that opinion, all that I ask of them is to come forward, and point out distinctly to the House the specific changes to which they ascribe these consequences. It is for them to show, if they can, by evidence, or by argument, the connexion of cause and effect between those changes and the difficulties in which the country is now, unhappily, involved. Let them give a notice, and appoint a day for that purpose. This would be the manly course to pursue,—it was the course taken by the honourable member for Coventry,* on the question of the Trade in Foreign Silks. For having taken this course I return him my sincere acknowledgments. To follow his example is the only favour I ask of those who heap abuse upon the measures in question, or who excite clamour out of doors, against the individual, upon whom has been devolved the task, however imperfectly executed, of submitting those measures, on the part of his Majesty's Government, for the approbation and sanction of parliament.

The right honourable gentleman concluded by moving for copies of the several Accounts and Returns to which he had referred in the course of his speech.

Mr. Baring said, there was hardly a single point in the elaborate detail of the right honourable the President of the Board of Trade, in which he did not concur; and he rose, not so much with the in-

* Mr. Ellice.

tention of following the right honourable gentleman's remarks, as with that of thanking him for the able manner in which he had developed his views, and for the general System which he proposed to adopt, with respect to our Domestic and Foreign Shipping. Mr. Hume repelled the outcry which had been raised against the principles on which the right honourable gentleman had been recently acting. Nothing, he said, could be more unjust than such an outcry: the evils under which the Shipping Interest now laboured, were not to be attributed to the change of system which the right honourable gentleman had introduced, but to the weight of taxation under which the country was labouring. Mr. Charles Grant said, that the great object which his right honourable friend wished to accomplish by his Statement of that night, was to prove to the nation, that the complaints made against him out of doors were utterly unfounded, and that the measures which he had introduced had not had any effect in diminishing the Commercial Marine of the country, but, on the contrary, had considerably increased it. The motion was agreed to.

CORN IMPORTATION ACTS—ORDER IN COUNCIL FOR OPENING THE PORTS.

November 24.

The House having resolved itself into a committee on the Corn Importation Acts, to which the Order in Council of the 1st of September, for allowing the Importation of certain sorts of Foreign Corn was referred,

Mr. HUSKISSON addressed the Committee. He began by observing, that as the Order in Council for the opening of the ports for the admission of oats, oatmeal, pease, beans, and rye, which had just been referred to the Committee, was issued, not only without the authority of law, but in direct contravention of existing statutes, and as his Majesty had called Parliament together at that early period, chiefly for the purpose of having that Order submitted for their consideration, he thus took the earliest opportunity of

submitting to the House the grounds on which his Majesty had been advised to issue that order. This was a duty which ministers owed to Parliament, to the country, and to themselves; and if it should be the pleasure of the legislature to grant them the indemnity for which they sued, so far from its becoming a dangerous precedent, it would rather tend to strengthen and confirm those bounds by which the different authorities in the State were limited. They owed it also to themselves, as they would otherwise be subject to certain legal penalties, for having so advised the Crown; and they likewise owed it to those subordinate officers who acted under their orders in opening the ports.

The date of the Order in Council was the 1st of September. At that time, most of the members of Parliament were resident in the country, and had an opportunity, in their several districts, of observing the state of the harvest. That circumstance would render it the less necessary for him to go into any lengthened statement on the present occasion; for he was certain the recollection of those members would bear him out in the assertion, that never was there a period when the reports from the different parts of the country so entirely concurred as to the harvest, and he hoped that those reports would be sufficient to justify ministers in the course they had pursued.

With respect to the state of the crops at that time, he would say first, that wheat, taken as a whole, was deficient in quantity and quality, and the quality of course affected the value of the quantity. Barley, on the whole, would not make more than about two-thirds of an average crop. Oats were generally deficient, and beans and pease much more so; and such had been the appearance of those crops in the ground, that in the month of July the prices were rapidly rising. About the middle of June, when the price of oats ought to be at the highest, as the old stock would at that

time be almost exhausted, the average price was 22*s.* 11*d.* On the 4th of August, taking the average of the whole kingdom, it had risen to 27*s.* 3*d.*, and had considerably exceeded that price in many districts. The House were aware, that the two weeks from that date were the only weeks which were left to be included in the general quarterly average. In the last of those two weeks it had risen 1*s.* 6*d.* above that price, at which, if it were the general average of the quarter, the ports would be open for the importation of foreign oats. Nevertheless, according to the general averages struck on the 15th of August (that being, as the House was well aware, one of the four quarterly periods for taking them), oats and the other species of grain could not by law be imported, nor could they have been so up to the 15th of November. With their information as to the general deficiency of the crop, and the consequent apprehended scarcity, Ministers waited to see what would be the price in the two weeks following, after the period when the general quarterly average had been taken. In the week ending the 18th, the general average price was 28*s.* 2*d.*; in that ending the 25th it was 29*s.* 4*d.*; and in the last days of the month it rose to above 30*s.* On the 1st of September it was 30*s.* 7*d.*, and was continuing to rise rapidly. The Committee would bear in mind that, in several districts, where oatmeal, and not flour, constituted a very large proportion of the food of the people, its price rose very much above that which had been quoted as the general average. Besides the knowledge of these facts, his Majesty's ministers had also the information, that the crop of oats was in general a failure in several foreign countries from which oats were usually imported. Knowing this, and seeing that great scarcity was to be apprehended at home, not merely from the deficiency of the oat crop, but from the general failure of leguminous productions through-

out the country, owing to the great drought which prevailed, it became necessary to take steps to make a timely provision, not merely for the cattle, but for that large portion of the people who were dependent on oatmeal for food. But another circumstance which operated on the decision of Ministers was, that the accounts from Lancashire and from Ireland were of such an alarming nature as almost to excite despair; and if the drought had continued, if Providence had not lent its aid by a timely fall of rain, the potato crops must have been ruined. In that case they would have had to fall back on the scanty supply of oats which remained, and must have found themselves in a state of the utmost distress, for a supply of food for the great mass of the people. During the whole of his experience, never did the country exhibit an appearance more alarming. To add to the grounds of apprehension, the hay crop, in the richest parts of England, was in a condition to call forth fears of the utmost scarcity; and the fact was, that, at the season of the year in question, such was the miserable state of vegetation, that it was absolutely necessary to feed cattle with dry fodder, as in the depth of winter.

In such a condition of the country, with such prospects, could there be the slightest hesitation in taking any step that might be requisite for securing to the country a supply of the first necessary of existence? Could his Majesty's ministers, for a single moment, entertain a doubt that their first duty was, at whatever risk, to guard against the impending scarcity, by the admission of pease, beans, and grain? The statements he had made, verified, as they must have been, by the personal observations of honourable gentlemen, fully warranted him in asserting, that had ministers waited till the 15th of November, when by law the ports might have been opened, the consequences would, in all probability, have proved most calamitous. From the rapid rise of prices before the 1st of September, their continued

elevation subsequent to that period, the condition of the crops at home, and the prospects of supply from abroad, he had not the slightest difficulty in saying, that the minister who hesitated to advise the admission of foreign grain, would have been equally unworthy of the favour of the monarch, and of that fair and liberal confidence which was reposed in the servants of the Crown, while Parliament was not sitting. He put it to the Committee, whether any minister deserved to be trusted by the Crown, or supported by Parliament, who could for a single instant hesitate to choose between a breach of the law on the one hand, or the risk, nay, the certainty, of famine on the other.

Having submitted to the Committee these observations, he trusted he had said enough to justify the measure that had been adopted, so far as it related to removing the prohibition, which would have excluded grain until the 15th of November, and he would have contented himself with having said thus much, had that measure been confined to simple removal. But there was another feature of the case which required notice. He alluded to the duty to be imposed on the grain admitted, or rather, he should say, undertaken to be paid thereon. A simple removal of the restriction on importation would not have been sufficient; they were, he thought, to let the importation be as much as possible in the spirit of the law which they were partially violating, and therefore certain duties were necessary to be paid. To have advised the levying those duties by virtue of an Order in Council, was what they would not have thought of; and had they entertained such an idea, he was sure that no Prince of the House of Brunswick would for a moment have listened to the advice. They therefore recommended, that the parties importing should give bond for the payment of a certain duty per quarter, not exceeding a fixed sum, should Parliament thereafter give its sanction to the amount then named, and in pursuance thereof bonds

had been entered into. They had acted thus, under the impression that Parliament would be disposed to give its sanction to the duties then named. There might, perhaps, be some difference of opinion in the House as to the amount they had named; but it was such as, to the best of their judgment, the case required. It would be necessary, therefore, that the act to be passed on the present occasion should not merely indemnify the parties who had incurred the responsibility of opening the ports, but that it should, if Parliament took the same view of the subject which he did, empower the Crown to recover these duties.

The principle upon which his Majesty's Ministers had acted in settling these Duties he would now explain. It was enacted by the existing law, that if the price of oats was above 28*s*., the duty was to be two shillings permanently, and two shillings additional for the first three months. It must be obvious, that the only intention for which the additional duty of two shillings had been imposed for the first three months was, to check the amount imported, lest it should exceed the wants of the country, and thus be injurious to the home grower. If the estimate which Ministers had taken of the harvest of the present year were a correct one, such a check must at this time be deemed unnecessary. The whole oat crop had hardly exceeded one half of an average crop. Instead, therefore, of checking the importation of this species of corn, Ministers were called upon to give encouragement to the largest importation. On the 8th of September the average price of the whole kingdom exceeded 30*s*. a quarter; on the 5th of August it had exceeded 30*s*. 4*d*. in not less than six districts. If no foreign corn had been introduced into this country until the 15th of November, the time at which it might have been imported by law, it was impossible to conceive that the price would not

have gone on rapidly increasing, and the return would have been very considerably above the legal importation price.

On the subject of the amount of the duty, he would observe, that he thought it should not have exceeded two shillings; for had four shillings been imposed, there could have been but little doubt that the importers would have waited until the 15th of November, and taken their chance of being then able to introduce it at the nominal duty of four pence the quarter. In confirmation of this opinion, he would observe, that of the 600,000 quarters imported, 150,000 were actually overheld: and the owners declining to pay the duty of two shillings, and rather desiring to take their chance on the 15th of November. In the last week, the prices were 29*s.* and 30*s.*, in thirteen agricultural counties out of twenty-four, from which he had received reports; and these reports, he could inform the Committee, were from counties where the great mass of the population were, in a considerable degree, dependent on oats for their food; amongst which might be included Durham, Cumberland, Northumberland, Chester, Gloucester, and Lancashire. In Lancashire the price was 35*s.*; affording another strong proof of the necessity there was for opening the ports, and obtaining a supply of that article. Under all these circumstances, he trusted he had made out a case to justify Ministers in taking off the prohibition, and thereby securing the country from the dangers with which it was threatened—dangers, from which, he trusted, the decision of the House would encourage the advisers of the Crown, at all times, to guard it. What, in addition to the indemnity, he intended to conclude with proposing to the Committee was, that the duty specified in the Order in Council should continue till the 15th of February, when the next average would be struck, and, in the mean time, that corn should be permitted to be introduced on the

payment of that duty, as had been done since the issue of the Order in Council. When the Committee looked at the price of grain generally, and of wheat in particular,—when they considered the scarcity of food for cattle, and for the great mass of the population,—they would, he was satisfied, concur with him in thinking, that not only had a sound discretion been exercised as to the past, but that a continuation of the system would be highly expedient. He would conclude with moving,

1. "That all persons concerned in issuing, or advising the issue, or acting in execution of, an Order in Council, of the 1st of September, 1826, for allowing the importation of certain sorts of foreign Corn, shall be indemnified.

2. "That the importation of foreign oats, oatmeal, rye, pease, and beans, be permitted for a time to be limited, on the payment of the duties hereinafter mentioned: that is to say, for every quarter of oats, *2s.*; for every boll of oatmeal, *2s. 2d.*; for every quarter of rye, pease, and beans, *3s. 6d.*; and that all bonds which may have been taken for the payment of such duties shall be duly discharged."

The Resolutions were agreed to.

FOREIGN GOODS IMPORTED IN 1824 AND 1826—EFFECT OF THE CUSTOMS' CONSOLIDATION ACT—TREATY WITH PORTUGAL.

November 30.

Sir Henry Parnell, with a view to ascertain what had been the effect of the measure passed last year, for altering the law with respect to the Importation of Foreign productions, moved for "an Account shewing the quantities of certain articles imported, and entered for home consumption, into the United Kingdom, from Foreign countries and the Colonies, in the years 1824 and 1826; and also shewing the rate

of duty payable on each article, in each of these years." After the motion had been seconded by Mr. Warburton, who also contended, that the system of Free Trade had been but imperfectly carried into effect,

Mr. HUSKISSON said, that as he did not feel the least wish to object to the production of the account for which the honourable baronet had called, and as he did not consider this a fit ocasion to enter into the subject of the Importation Duties, he should make but a very few observations upon the question. He was of opinion, that the great principles which regulated, or which ought to regulate, the Commercial Policy of this and of other countries, required a more solemn consideration than could be given them at the present moment; and believing this, he trusted he should stand excused to the House for saying, that it seemed to him the better time for entering into the discussion would be after the information sought for by these returns had been obtained.

Perhaps he might be allowed to observe, that a great difference of opinion seemed to exist among the impugners of the Measures which he had had the honour to introduce and to advocate—perhaps he might be permitted to say, that those who, out of doors, clamoured loudly against those measures as being injurious to the trade and commerce of the country, had founded their clamours upon the speeches of the gentlemen opposite; some of whom now complained of those very measures, as not being sufficiently strong. On the one hand, there was the complaint that too much had been done for Free Trade; while on the other, there was an equally loud complaint, that nothing, or next to nothing, had been done. He would not now stay to discriminate between such conflicting extremes of opinion. He could not, however, but wonder, that while gentlemen within the House asserted, that the principles of free trade had not been carried far enough, there should be others

out of the House persevering in their attempts to direct the opposition of the misinformed towards those measures, which he could boldly and confidently declare, had in no degree contributed to the distresses lately experienced in this country

Before he sat down, he would give the honourable baronet the explanation he required, upon the subject of the Treaty with Portugal. It was true, that the period when either this country or Portugal might revise the terms of that treaty arrived in June last, and Portugal had expressed a wish that some alterations should be made in it before it was renewed. Those alterations were still the subject of discussion between the two Governments, and, until they should be arranged, the treaty would continue in force, as it was in terms a perpetual treaty, subject only to alteration and revision, at certain stated periods. That was the state in which things now stood; and Ministers were, therefore, not at liberty at present to deal with the question of the duty on French and Portuguese wines, as the treaty was still pending.

There were other branches of this subject to which the honourable seconder had alluded; but which it was not now the proper time to discuss. He would, however, remind that honourable gentleman, that there was not a single measure to which he had adverted, that was not expressly pointed out to Ministers by the Navigation Laws. Whether those laws ought, or ought not, to be altered, was another question; but, while they continued in their present state, and remained as the guides of our Foreign Commerce, they must be obeyed, and Ministers had not the power to change the course which they directed to be pursued.

The motion was then agreed to.

STATE OF THE CURRENCY—ALTERATION OF THE CORN LAWS.

December 1.

Lord Folkestone, seeing the President of the Board of Trade in his place, asked, whether it was the intention of Government to introduce any measure respecting the Currency, in consequence of what had taken place in the Committee on the Small Note Bill, during the last session? Mr. Huskisson said, he was not prepared to answer the noble lord's question: upon which the noble lord remarked upon the extraordinary situation in which Parliament was placed, by the conduct of Ministers, both with respect to the Currency and the Corn Laws. They were assembled, he said, at an inconvenient season of the year; and yet they were told by Ministers, that no discussion was to take place upon a subject, on which the greatest excitement was raised throughout the country.

Mr. Huskisson observed, that the noble lord had inferred more from the answer which he had returned to the noble lord's question, than the fair import of that answer warranted. The noble lord had alluded to the Committee of Inquiry on the Scotch Small Note currency, and had asked him whether it was intended to take any steps in consequence of what had taken place in this Committee? His answer was, that he was not then prepared to inform the noble lord whether it was intended by Government, to propose either the revival of the Committee, or the adoption of any proceedings founded upon their Report. From this answer the noble lord had thought fit to infer, prematurely, that no steps whatever would be taken.

He again stated, that his Majesty's Government had not had an opportunity of considering whether it was necessary or not, to renew the Committee in question; and therefore he was not prepared to say whether they would do so, or whether they would take any steps on the Report already printed. The noble lord expressed his surprise, that when

a Report had been presented in a former session, on a subject involving questions of the greatest public interest, his Majesty's Government, ten days after the meeting of Parliament, on a special occasion, and at an unusual period, should not be prepared with the developement of most important subjects, perfectly distinct from those for which they had been, he might say, specially assembled.

The noble lord, who was a great friend to the liberties of the people, and a great stickler for a close adherence to constitutional forms, could not see for what Parliament was assembled, if not to dispose of the Currency and Corn questions. He would tell the noble lord, it was assembled in deference to the constitution. It was assembled because his Majesty's Ministers had advised a breach of the law, on a subject of great and peculiar interest. His Majesty's Ministers conceived, that having violated the law, they were bound to call Parliament together, to sit in judgment on their acts, and either to indemnify them for what they had done, or put an end to the continuance of the violation. His Majesty's Ministers conceived, that on the very same day on which they advised the violation of the constitution, they ought also to advise his Majesty to call Parliament together, as soon as they could conveniently be assembled. It was on that ground, and for that purpose, that Parliament had been summoned to meet; and he was sure it would not be matter of surprise to the majority of that House, or to the country at large, that it was not proposed to Parliament at the present period of the year, to proceed to the permanent settlement of such great questions as those connected with the Corn and the Currency. It was never usual to bring on important topics, such as these, within a few days of an expected adjournment. The noble lord must be aware, from the circumstance of the present being a new Parliament, that important questions could

not, for some time, be proceeded with, to any great length; and it would be extremely unfair and injurious to the country, to bring forward any important measure, which could not be pursued to its termination.

The noble lord had said, that all this was a pretence—that Ministers had not made up their minds with respect to the plan which they intended to prepare regarding the Corn Laws—and that it was because they were not ready, that they did not come forward. He would only say, in answer, that his Majesty's Ministers were prepared and were agreed, as to the measures they should bring forward, with a view to the permanent settlement of the Corn Laws; but they thought it would not be conducive to the interests of the country—they thought it would be calculated to occasion a most injurious division of feeling, and conflict of opinion, if they brought forward such a subject, at a time when it was impossible to pursue it to its accomplishment. The noble lord had also said, that he recollected Parliament having been called together at as early a period as the present, for the dispatch of general business; and among other instances, he had specified one, in which it was assembled for the purpose of providing means to obviate an apprehended scarcity. But that was quite beside the present question. The present case was simply this—Ministers having adopted certain measures which appeared to them to be expedient, although in violation of the law, Parliament had been assembled, to say whether they had done right or not. Now the period might be very unfit for the consideration of a permanent alteration in the law, which was extremely fit for the consideration of the propriety of a temporary expedient, which had grown out of an urgent occasion.

He perfectly agreed with the noble lord, that the question respecting the Corn Laws must be looked at, with

more or less reference to the question respecting the Currency. But what he maintained was, that these two questions, questions of such magnitude, could not be advantageously considered at the present inconvenient season; and that, therefore, it was much more wise to postpone them until the ordinary period. The noble lord had reproached him with not having, last session, in the Committee on Small Notes, directed any inquiries, to ascertain how far the comforts of the agricultural population of Scotland had been affected by the introduction of one-pound notes. The fact, however, was, that so remote was the period at which these notes had been introduced into the Scotch circulation, that it would, he thought, be impossible to get any witness from that country, to tell, from his own experience, what had been the effect of the withdrawing of gold from circulation. The notes had been introduced so long back, that no person now alive could remember their introduction; and if, to escape the noble lord's reproach, he had asked such a question, he was sure he should have been laughed at. He was satisfied that neither by the House, nor by the country, would his Majesty's Ministers be censured for not bringing forward the subjects of the Currency, or the Corn Laws, at this particular period.

JOINT-STOCK COMPANIES FORMED DURING THE YEARS 1824, 1825, AND 1826.

December 5.

This day, Mr. Alderman Waithman called the attention of the House to the Joint-Stock Companies which had been formed during the last three years. They amounted, he said, in number to no fewer than six hundred, and required, for the execution of their intended operations, a capital of many millions. He complained of

the dishonest views with which they were originally set on foot; the knavery by which a fictitious value was, for a time, given to shares which had cost nothing, that the solid differences between imaginary prices might fill the pockets of the gambling speculators; and of the misery and ruin produced by this systematic swindling. In particular, he instanced the conduct of the Directors of the Arigna Mining Company, and concluded with moving, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the origin, management, and present state of the Joint-Stock Companies, which had been formed during the years 1824, 1825, and 1826, and to report the same, with any special matter touching the conduct of any Member of that House." Mr. Canning objected to the extent of the inquiry, which, he said, to be useful, must be limited and precise: but, as enough had passed to afford strong grounds for suspicion, that in the affairs of the Arigna Company there was matter deserving of inquiry, he would move an amendment, limiting the labours of the Committee to the management and history of that Company. Mr. Attwood entered into an able defence of Joint-Stock Companies, against the wholesale accusation brought against them by the honourable alderman. There was, he said, no more harm in buying or selling a share, than there was in purchasing or selling a shawl. For himself, he could safely say, that he was not aware of having ever been engaged in a single Company, which could be deemed derogatory to his station as a member of parliament. Were they, he asked, to infer bad conduct, because of the connection of a Member with some of these Companies? If so, then even the right honourable the President of the Board of Trade was not safe; for, so far back as the year 1822, he had been connected with one of them; but nobody doubted, that it was because he thought such Companies advantageous to the Public, and because there were men amongst them of sound character and strict integrity.

Mr. Huskisson said, that as an allusion had been made to him, it became his turn to explain what had been his conduct, during the prevalence of the occurrences which had been so much alluded to. The honourable member for Callington* was, however, under some mistake, or misap-

* Mr. Attwood.

prehension, when he insinuated that he had had the least connection with any of these speculations. He could assure him, that neither directly nor indirectly, had he had the least share, or interest, in any Company which had been formed in the years 1824, 1825, 1826. He had, indeed, an interest in one of the oldest Insurance Companies of the country, but it had remained of the same amount during the last twenty years. It was not, however, because he held a particular situation under the Government, that he felt himself disqualified from applying his private property to such beneficial purposes as fairly presented themselves to his view; but the fact was, that he had never thought of embarking in these speculations, and, with the exception of some inconsiderable shares in two canals, one of them near his country residence, and the other locally connected with his interests in another point of view, he had never been in any way engaged in these Companies.

If the honourable member alluded to the Company which had been formed to promote the growth of silk in Ireland, he would explain, in a few words, all the connection he had had with that Company. When the parties who had projected it came to the Board of Trade, he had specifically stated to them, that though he thought it a desirable experiment, and wished it to have a fair trial, and though, under other circumstances, he might have felt disposed to take an interest in it, yet, considering the situation he held, as President of the Board of Trade, he could not expose himself to the misapprehension that would be likely to arise from his so doing. When the parties applied to him, to know what number of shares would be taken, he informed them, that there must have been some misconception as to the intentions of the Government, which was desirous only of giving that degree of counte-

nance to the experiment, which might facilitate the object of providing employment to a large portion of the population of Ireland. Such was the nature of this application, and such the answer which had been given on the part of the Government; and he defied the honourable gentleman to point out a single speculation, of any description, with which he had had the slightest connection, either directly or indirectly.

He had heard with great satisfaction the very sound and able vindication which the honourable member for Callington had been enabled, from his personal knowledge and individual information, to give of the benefit and utility of Joint-Stock Companies. It was extremely desirable that some explanation should go forth to the Public, which might counteract the unmeasured condemnation which the honourable alderman had thought proper to pronounce upon these Companies. If there was one circumstance to which, more than another, this country owed its wealth and its commercial advantages, it was the existence of Joint-Stock Companies. Its canals, its bridges, all its great works, had been carried on by Joint-Stock Companies; and it was an advantage peculiar to this country, that such important undertakings were conducted by individuals interested in their success: whereas, in other countries, where they were left to the care of the Government, they were often neglected and left unfinished. Many of these works had been extremely disadvantageous to the persons who had originally embarked in them. This had been the case with regard to the New River Company. It must be admitted, that there could hardly be a greater benefit to a populous city than an abundant supply of pure and wholesome water. The individuals, however, by whom this project was originally undertaken, were involved in great loss; but, ultimately, the Public had derived the greatest

benefit from it, and the successors of the first projectors had been amply remunerated. The same thing had happened with respect to many of our Bridges and Harbours; and, in general, it might be observed, that it was one of the circumstances which distinguished this country above all others, that great and important works were conducted by Joint-Stock Companies—not always to the interest of the parties who embarked in such speculations, but uniformly to the interest and advantage of the Public. There could not, therefore, be a greater error, or a greater delusion, than that under which it had been attempted to cry down Joint-Stock Companies as public evils. It was only in the last session, that efforts had been made to prevail on the Bank of England so far to relax its charter, as to admit of the formation of Joint-Stock Companies, with a view of rendering the business of Banking less hazardous; and the example of Scotland was cited, where there was no impediment to the formation of such Companies.

The honourable alderman had talked as if the formation of Joint-Stock Companies, for the purpose of carrying on the business of Mining, was a new discovery. He could, however, tell the honourable alderman, that all the great mining works in this country had been carried on, time out of mind, by Joint-Stock Companies. The mines in Cornwall and in Wales had been conducted by such Companies. No man could regret more than he did, that the law relating to Joint-Stock Companies was not more satisfactory; for while its object should be to controul the excesses to which such Companies were liable, it should also afford proper encouragement to those by whom undertakings of public utility were first designed. It was, therefore, mischievous and impolitic to pass a sweeping censure on Joint-Stock Companies generally, and it was no less unfair and unwise to take away the characters of those persons who

might happen to be concerned in them. He would not dispute that there had been many Bubbles, as they were called, which reflected deep disgrace upon those by whom they had been concocted; but he must repeat, that many of the projects which had been formed were likely to conduce, in a large degree, to the public interest. The mischievous effects of some of the late schemes and bubbles were but too visible in the ruin and destruction of many; and those individuals on whom guilt could fairly be fastened, deserved that disgrace which their proceedings called for. Whenever the subject of those shameless speculators should be brought under the consideration of the House, he would raise, as he always had raised, his voice against them, as schemes fraught with fraud in some instances, and with hazard and obvious folly, in others. The honourable alderman had particularly alluded to the Brick Company, and to the Milk Company, and some others of a like description. Of these, and similar wild schemes, he had already expressed his opinion in that House; and he had warned the public against connecting themselves with schemes which had evidently no other foundation than the folly or avarice of the projectors. He wished sincerely that the law was so constituted as to prevent parties from engaging in such delusions, and he was quite ready to agree with the honourable alderman, that when frauds and abuses, either in Companies or individuals, could be proved, they ought to be punished; but while he thus far concurred with the honourable alderman, he could not join in the clamour against a principle, which was one of the great foundations of our commercial prosperity, and which he considered essential to the best interests of the country.

The Amendment was agreed to, and a Committee appointed.

EXPORTATION OF MACHINERY.

December 6.

Mr. Hume, on presenting a Petition from the Machine Makers of Manchester, praying for an alteration of the Law prohibiting the Exportation of Machinery, suggested to the right honourable the President of the Board of Trade, whether it was right to continue a system of Prohibitions with respect to Machinery, when he was endeavouring to abolish that system with regard to every other article of industry?

Mr. HUSKISSON appealed to the honourable member for Aberdeen, whether a question of immense importance could with propriety be discussed at a period when so many thousands of manufacturers were either out of work, or but partially employed. If it could even be proved, that the exportation of machinery would not be attended with any ill effects, still he was perfectly convinced, that the agitation of this subject would alarm the manufacturers, and prevent them from going on with their respective branches of manufacture. He assured the honourable gentleman, that if a Bill were to be introduced, which had for its object the abolition of every restriction upon the exportation of machinery, it would be productive of serious alarm in the manufacturing districts, and would give rise to the presentation of numerous petitions from all parts of the country to that House. He trusted, therefore, that the honourable member would confine himself to the presentation of the petition, and would not follow it up with any specific motion.

It had been generally agreed, that some alteration in the law relating to the exportation of Machinery should take place; and the question having been agitated some time ago, a regulation was made, investing the Board of Trade with a discretionary power, as to the kinds of machinery which might, or might not, be exported. The discretion thus vested in the Board of Trade was of a most disagreeable

and unpleasant nature. It was, moreover, liable to this objection—that in whatever way the Board decided, the party to whom the right of exportation was refused conceived himself injured, and looked with jealousy on another party to whom a liberty to export certain different articles was permitted. Upon this ground alone he felt the necessity of establishing some fixed principle of exportation and prohibition of all articles of machinery. He had himself endeavoured to lay down a rule by which the discretion vested in the Board of Trade should be regulated; and that principle was this—that when machinery was of great bulk, and contained a great quantity of the raw material, then no objection should be made to exportation, as he considered that no injury could be done to the country by it. But where the machinery was one of modern improvement, and depended mainly upon the ingenuity and excellence of the mechanism, and where the raw material used was trifling, he felt that he owed it to the manufacturer to restrain, as far as he could, the exportation of such machinery. The mischief that would arise from altering the law respecting a general exportation of machinery might be collected from this fact—that there were at the present moment, many manufacturing establishments standing still on the Continent, under the expectation of obtaining machinery of a particular description from this country.

Under these circumstances, then, and particularly in the present state of the manufacturing interests, he implored the honourable member not to agitate the question at present. He was ready to give any assistance in his power, either in his individual capacity, or as a member of a Committee, towards simplifying and more strictly defining the law; but he did not wish it to go forth to the public, that the whole law with regard to the exportation of machinery might be safely repealed.

EXPOSITION OF THE STATE OF THE BRITISH COMMERCIAL SHIPPING INTEREST.

May 7, 1827.*

Early in the session, General Gascoyne gave notice of a motion on the distressed State of the Shipping Interest. The motion was repeatedly postponed in consequence of Mr. Huskisson's severe illness. On the 10th of March, Mr. Baring, on presenting a Petition from the Ship-owners of London, complaining of the changes which had been made in the Navigation Laws, took the opportunity of asking the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, whether it was the intention of Government to grant a Committee on the subject? He said he thought some inquiry necessary, for the purpose of ascertaining whether the distress proceeded from the measures which had been adopted, or whether it was the consequence of that general stagnation of Trade, which had, more or less, affected all the other branches of national industry. Mr. Charles Grant answered, that his right honourable friend, the President of the Board of Trade, was

* The following is a List of the Ministry, as it was settled under Mr. Canning :

Cabinet Ministers.

Earl of Harrowby	President of the Council; shortly after succeeded by the Duke of Portland.
Lord Lyndhurst	Lord Chancellor.
Duke of Portland	Lord Privy Seal; shortly after succeeded by the Earl of Carlisle.
Right Hon. George Canning	First Lord of the Treasury, and Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Right Hon. W. S. Bourne	Secretary of State for the Home Department; shortly after succeeded by the Marquis of Lansdowne.
Viscount Dudley and Ward	Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Viscount Goderich	Secretary of State for the Department of War and the Colonies.
Right Hon. C. W. W. Wynn	President of the Board of Control.
Lord Bexley	Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
Right Hon. William Huskisson	Treasurer of the Navy, and President of the Board of Trade.

extremely anxious to take the earliest opportunity, which his health would allow of, to put the House in possession of the views of Government, upon the whole question connected with the Shipping Interest of the country. Accordingly, General Gascoyne, this day, opened the subject to the House, and moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the present Distressed State of the British Commercial Shipping Interest." The motion having been opposed by Mr. Poulett Thompson, and defended by Mr. Liddell and by Sir Joseph Yorke, who hoped that the House, notwithstanding the speech it might hear from the President of the Board of Trade, would not be led away by words calculated to make "the worse appear the better reason," but would confine itself to practical facts, and discard theoretical arguments,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose, and spoke as follows:—

I do not regret, Sir, that, by giving way to the gallant admiral,* I afforded him an opportunity of cautioning the

Viscount Palmerston .....Secretary at War.
Right Hon. George Tierney.....Master of the Mint.
Earl of Carlisle ..... { First Commissoner of Woods and Forests; succeeded by the Right Hon. W. S. Bourne.

Not of the Cabinet.

H. R. H. the Duke of Clarence ...Lord High Admiral.
Marquis of Anglesey ..... { Master-General of the Ordnance; shortly after a place in the Cabinet.
Right Hon. Vesey Fitz-Gerald...Paymaster of the Forces.
Duke of Manchester .....Postmaster-General.
J. C. Herries, Esq. ..... } Secretaries of the Treasury.
Joseph Planta, Esq. ..... }
Right Hon. C. Grant ..... { Vice-President of the Board of Trade.
Right Hon. Sir John Leach .....Master of the Rolls.
Right Hon. Sir L. Shadwell .....Vice-Chancellor.
Sir James Scarlett .....Attorney-General.
Sir N. C. Tindal .....Solicitor-General.

Ministry of Ireland.

Marquis Wellesley .....Lord Lieutenant.
Right Hon. Sir A. Hart .....Lord Chancellor.
Right Hon. William Lamb .....Chief Secretary.
Right Hon. Sir George Hill, Bart....Vice-Treasurer.

* Sir Joseph Yorke.

House not to be misled by arguments calculated to make "the worse appear the better cause." The House will know how to appreciate the value of the gallant admiral's advice, and to apply it to the speech with which he has just favoured us.

Before I proceed to those observations, which it will be my duty to make on the motion of my honourable colleague, the House, I trust, will allow me to offer my unfeigned acknowledgments for their kind consideration towards me, in having, more than once, postponed the discussion of this important question before the Easter recess, when I was unavoidably absent from their debates. Those who have witnessed my conduct in former parliaments will give me credit when I say, that I always feel deep regret, if, from any cause, I am prevented attending my public duty in this place. My regret has, in the present instance, been greatly increased, by the consideration, that this House was occupied before the recess, with another very important question—I mean the Corn Laws; in the course of the discussions upon which, frequent reference was made to the opinions which I had professed, and to the part which I had taken on former occasions upon that subject.

Neither of that reference, nor of any animadversions which may have accompanied it, have I a disposition or a right to complain. I admit that, in thus referring to my conduct and opinions, honourable members have done no more than they were called upon to do by their own sense of public duty. They were the less called upon to be scrupulous in this respect, as they were aware that, at some future time, an opportunity would, in all probability, be afforded me, of defending myself, if necessary, against any imputations which might be cast upon me, and of making that defence, in the presence of those by whom my conduct had been arraigned, and before the same tribunal by which the charge had been heard.

Whilst I feel, therefore,—as I sincerely do feel,—nothing but thankfulness for the consideration with which I have been treated during my absence, by all parties in this House, I must say, that I cannot but take a very different view of an attack, altogether unprovoked, which was made in another place, upon my public character and conduct, at a moment when I was wholly disabled by illness, from taking any notice of that unwarrantable proceeding:—in a place, too, where, neither in sickness nor in health, neither now, nor at any time hereafter, can I be permitted to meet, face to face, the individual making that unjust attack, or be afforded an opportunity of repelling it before the assembly to which it was addressed. It may have suited the taste, it may have been congenial to the feelings of that individual, to represent me, under these circumstances, as a "wild theorist, ready at all times to attempt any experiment, no matter how hazardous." It may have been deemed justifiable by that individual, to charge me with having palmed measures upon the House and upon the country, under false pretences. It may have been——

Mr. Cressett Pelham rose to order. He observed, that the right honourable gentleman was out of order, inasmuch as he was alluding to expressions which had been used in debate, in the other House of Parliament.

Mr. Huskisson. If an allegation—an unjust and unfounded allegation—be made against me, I must answer it when I can. If my character is attacked and calumniated in another place, in which I cannot be heard, I must avail myself of the opportunity of defending it in a place where I can be heard. It has been asserted of me, in the place to which I allude, that I have palmed upon the House and the country measures of great public importance, under false pretences, and that I have been guilty—neither more nor less—of a gross political fraud.

It is an old observation, and not the less true because it is old, that those who are the most ready to indulge in tortuous courses themselves, are usually the most ready to charge that species of conduct upon others. An indignant denial is all the answer which I can give at present to the accusation brought against me. Were I to enter into particulars, I fear I should depart too widely from the question which is at present before us; but this I will say—I have now, for more than thirty years, had the honour of a seat in this House, during the whole of which period, down to the present hour, I have always acted under a sense of that moral responsibility to public opinion and the judgment of my country, to which every man, be his rank or station what it may, is liable, for the part which he takes in the votes and proceedings of Parliament. That moral responsibility, which, in fact, constitutes public character, I am not afraid to encounter. I am equally ready to meet the more direct responsibility, which attaches to me as a minister of the Crown, not only for the measures which I have brought forward in this House on the part of his Majesty's Government, but also for every other measure, in which I have concurred, since I have had the honour of serving his Majesty in that capacity. I make this declaration without the slightest reserve, and I trust without any unbecoming arrogance. Further it would be improper to speak of myself. But, with regard to the individual who has thus attacked me, without the slightest provocation on my part, I must be allowed to remark, that I have been an attentive observer of his public career for the last five-and-thirty years. I have done more. I have read all the multifarious works which he has published during that period, whether on general politics, political economy, or political philosophy,—all the theoretical lucubrations with which he has enlightened the world, down even to his last

"Chart of the Corn Laws." I have read them all; and, in saying this, I am aware that I have executed a task, of which very few men besides myself can boast. The conclusion to which I have come—a conclusion not of yesterday, but now of some years standing—is that, among the many mercies which have been vouchsafed to this country, since the breaking out of the revolutionary war in 1792, there are few for which she ought to be more thankful, than for those fortunate occurrences, which, on more than one occasion, have disappointed the aspiring ambition of that individual—occurrences which have hitherto prevented his being placed in any station of power, in which he might have been enabled to inflict the application of his own extravagant theories—and theories more extravagant were certainly never conceived by man—either upon the people of this country or upon that far more numerous, but more helpless population, which is placed under our protection, in another quarter of the world. Having escaped so long, I trust there is now no risk, that any part of the British empire will ever fall under such a visitation.

To come, Sir, to the question more immediately under discussion—first begging pardon of the House for this digression, upon matters principally personal to myself. I rejoice, most sincerely, that the gallant General, my honourable colleague, has brought forward his present motion: not only because it affords me an opportunity of defending my own conduct, but because it has given to the honourable member for Northumberland,* an occasion for a display of the clear and able manner in which he can state his views on an extended an intricate subject, and of talents for business, which cannot fail of being duly appreciated by the important county which he represents. It has also afforded to the honourable member for Dover† an

* Mr. Liddell. † Mr. Poulett Thompson.

opportunity of manifesting an extraordinary degree of acuteness and knowledge, in respect to the commerce and navigation of the country, and of stating his information in a manner which must, I am sure, have made the most favourable impression upon the House.

Among the many extraordinary statements which fell from my gallant Colleague, there was none which I heard with more surprise, than his remark, that, for the last two or three years, the table of this House has been overwhelmed with Petitions from the Ship-Owners of all the ports of Great Britain, complaining of their distressed condition; and that his Majesty's Government had never condescended to pay to them the slightest attention. Now, what is the real state of the case? In the course of the last session, but not till the last session, some petitions were presented to the House on this subject. And what became of them? The honourable members who presented these petitions contented themselves with moving, that they should be laid on the table of the House, and be printed. These formalities fulfilled by those immediately entrusted with these petitions, they would have been forgotten if I had not felt it my duty minutely to investigate the allegation contained in them,—"that the shipping and carrying trade of the country were in a rapid state of decay." Having satisfied myself that the allegation was unfounded, it became my further duty to endeavour to dispel any unfavourable impression which it was calculated to make upon the public mind. With that view, I did, uncalled-for, bring forward an Exposition of what I knew to be the real situation of the commercial marine of the kingdom. I made that statement for the purpose of removing any apprehensions, needlessly but industriously excited, with respect to an interest so nearly connected with the honour and the safety of the empire. In submitting that state-

ment to the House, about a twelvemonth ago, I availed myself of the opportunity which it afforded me, of explicitly declaring the principles which I entertain on the subject of our Navigation Laws;—of explaining and vindicating the measures which had been adopted by his Majesty's Government in reference to those Laws;—of bringing fully and fairly before the country the present state of our Commerce and Marine;—the great increase in their amount since the year 1792;—and of comparing our present means of sustaining and manning our military marine with those which we could command at former periods; as well as with the means possessed, both now and at former periods, by the powers which have been, and may again be, opposed to us in maritime warfare.

This statement, which I submitted to the last Parliament, is now before the public, and in a shape, I am ready to allow, which entitles any gentleman who may do me the honour to refer to it, to hold me responsible for its contents. It has been made the ground, or pretext, of so many misrepresentations out of doors, that I feel thankful for this opportunity of setting myself right, and—what is of far more consequence than any personal consideration—of setting the Government and the late Parliament right, in the judgment of the country, upon this important subject. If the House will favour me with a patient hearing, and my own physical powers will permit, I trust that, before I sit down, I shall be able to expose those misrepresentations; and, if I succeed in that object, I shall feel equally confident of relieving myself from the calumnies which, with no sparing hand, have been heaped upon me personally, in the course of the last year. Let not the hireling authors of those calumnies suppose that I am about to retort upon them, the low and vulgar abuse which they have attempted to cast upon me. The only

punishment which they shall receive at my hands is to show them, that their venom has fallen innocuous upon me; that I am not infected by it; and that, however unjustly attacked, I feel too much respect for this House—and, I might add, too much self-respect—to resort to such base engines in my defence.

But, if I abstain from noticing personal abuse and malignant insinuations, I cannot extend the same degree of forbearance to the arguments, the misstatements, the sophisms, and, I must add, the falsehoods, which have been brought forward, I will not say by the Ship-Owners, but by their advocates, in the present controversy. Even with respect to the Ship-Owners themselves, although great allowance is to be made for the irritation of men suffering under pressure and difficulties, I cannot consent to flatter their feelings, and to purchase their good-will, at the expense of compromising the claims of truth, and the permanent interests of the country.

I am not unaware, Sir, of all the disadvantages under which I approach the discussion of this great question. Many honourable gentlemen may think it necessary—and for this I do not blame them—to yield to the solicitations of their constituents. I am not ignorant that, even amongst those gentlemen who have no constituents immediately connected with the Shipping Interest, an active canvas has been carried on, and that *ex-parte* statements have been industriously laid before them by the delegates from the Out-Ports, with a view to influence their judgment, and to secure their votes on the present question:—a question upon which it is the more easy to excite alarm, from its being so intimately connected with the maritime power of the country. When this paramount interest is represented to be in jeopardy, it is natural that honourable members should listen with attention to those who, in pointing out

the supposed danger, are ready, at the same time, to suggest the course by which it may be averted.

I know, likewise, what active and incessant efforts have been made to influence the feelings, if not the votes, of all who entertain opinions, in any degree, or upon any particular point—the Corn Laws, for instance—at variance with the general principles of our domestic and commercial policy; —to array those feelings under the popular banner of the Shipping Interest, and to enlist the most laudable impulse of national pride and maritime glory, on the side of that general struggle which is now carried on, in certain quarters, against every attempt at improvement.

Notwithstanding all these considerations, and making every allowance for those honourable members who are, in a manner, obliged to vote in favour of the gallant General's motion, in deference to the wishes of their constituents (conduct, for which, be it remembered, I am far from imputing any blame), I still feel it to be my bounden duty, however much these circumstances may tell upon the division, to state fully and fearlessly, the grounds upon which I stand—trusting that the great majority of this House do not come to the discussion of this important question, as members are sometimes said to attend upon a private bill; —that their votes are not pledged to some petty and local interest; that they are not flocking here to-night, for the purpose of redeeming any such pledges given out of doors; but for that of pronouncing an impartial judgment, after hearing both sides of the question now under consideration.

Now, I feel myself, at the very outset, I own, rather at a loss how to deal with that question,—a difficulty not created by any thing which I have heard for the first time this evening, but arising out of the statements and arguments resorted to, by those who have had the manage-

ment of the question out of doors. These parties—I mean the Ship-Owners and their advocates—appear to me to employ a mode of reasoning quite peculiar to themselves, and which I know not how to designate, unless I describe it as resembling that philosophy which prevailed during the middle ages. To reason from facts, observation, and experience—to draw conclusions from what is passing before them—is a system not yet adopted by those who claim to be exclusively *practical men*. In their method of induction, indeed, facts are precisely what they are most disposed to overlook. Thus far, at least, their wisdom is in accordance with the wisdom of their ancestors, the Philosophers of those middle ages, who, setting their faces against all improvements, denied all facts, which they could not reconcile to their own preconceived doctrines. Of this philosophy we had something like a sample last year, in the question of the Silk Trade. All that was thought necessary, on the part of the advocates of prohibition, was to assume, as incontrovertible, that the silk manufacture of this country would, necessarily, be altogether ruined, root and branch, by the then pending change in the law. Here was the theory of *practical men*. That theory once admitted, the inferences were not difficult to draw. Those inferences were stated as so many undeniable facts;—the total annihilation of a capital amounting to many millions sterling;—five hundred thousand industrious people, women and children, deprived of all means of subsistence;—and I know not how many other horrible consequences; all so much taken for granted, that I was pointed out as a "cold-hearted, callous metaphysician," who, worse than the Devil, could contemplate unmoved the certainty of so much wretchedness and distress!

In spite of this frightful denunciation, the House resolved to abide the result of the alteration, which was then about

to take effect, in respect to the Silk Trade of this country. The new law came into operation last July, at a period of peculiar pressure and difficulty, in every branch of our manufactures. Yet, nevertheless, I have now the satisfaction of stating, that there is no one extensive manufacture, which has suffered so little from the distress of the times, as that of which the total ruin and annihilation had been so confidently foretold. Nay, more; I am enabled to add, that the result of a free competition has been this—that more real improvement has been made in the Silk manufacture of this country, within the last twelvemonth, than had been made for half a century before. I assert this, on the authority of the manufacturers themselves; and I say that, at this moment, those manufacturers are not only fearless of the rivalry of France in foreign markets, but, in some articles, are able to undersell the French manufacturer, even in his own market: and, so little do they dread the competition of Bandana handkerchiefs, against which no rate of duty, however high, we were assured, could afford protection, that silk handkerchiefs are now actually weaving in England, for the purpose of being sent out to the Indian market.

But, Sir, the Ship-Owners go even a stage further than the Silk manufacturers. They are not content to assume what *will* be the inevitable result of the measures adopted by Government for the regulation of our Navigation system; they positively assert, that those results *have* already taken place. They maintain, that the Shipping Interest of this country is, at the present moment, in a state of rapid decay. This is the burthen of all the petitions which have been presented on this subject. I have been at the pains of reading them all; and there is not one which does not proceed upon the assumed fact, that Foreign Shipping resorting to our ports has increased in an alarming degree, and

that the shipping of this country has decreased in the same proportion. From this assumption it is inferred—and, if the premises be correct, there is no disputing the conclusion —that the shipping of other states will, ere long, supersede our own shipping in the foreign trade of the country.

Now, upon this point rests the whole question between the Ship-Owners and his Majesty's Government. We are at issue upon the fact; and that issue is what the House is is called upon this evening to try. If the fact shall be established, it will then be our duty to examine how far the inferences are correct; and, if they are correct, to lose no time in considering of the best means of averting from the country the evils involved in these inferences. But, if the pretended fact should be altogether unfounded—if the true state of things should turn out to be the reverse of what is alleged by the petitioners,—surely we may dismiss the inference, and save ourselves the trouble of any further proceeding. Upon the showing of the petitioners themselves, there would be no ground for the Committee proposed by the gallant General; and to grant it, under such circumstances, would only tend to raise a doubt, both at home and abroad, upon the disposition to persevere in our present system of commercial policy:—a system which, his Majesty's Government are persuaded, is calculated to advance the general interests of the country, without creating any prejudice to the separate interests of the Ship-Owner.

The gallant General has stated, that it is not his fault that this question was not brought forward at a much earlier period of the session. If there be blame anywhere, I am afraid I am the principal cause of this delay. But I own that, for the fair discussion of the question, I cannot regret that it was deferred. If we had gone into this subject previous to the recess, we could not have had before us

the annual Accounts of Tonnage and Shipping, which are never laid upon the table till the 25th of March. Without those Accounts, we should not have possessed any authentic means of examining the assertions, upon the validity of which we are now to decide.

I will not affirm of the Petitioners, who have complained of this delay, any thing so offensive as that they were aware, that when these accounts should be produced, they would overturn all their statements: but I will say, that those statements have been made at random; although I am ready to concede, that they were according to the best of the belief of the persons who have signed these petitions. They have taken the allegations upon credit, from those who have had the task of what is called "getting up the petition,"—a practice, I am afraid, become very common of late years, and by which the value of one of the most important rights of the subject, and the influence of petitions in this House, have been rather impaired than strengthened.

The truth of this observation, I own, has been somewhat confirmed to me by the attention which I have found it my duty to give to the allegations in the petitions now under consideration—allegations which have surprised me not a little. The confidence, not to say the credulity, of the Petitioners, must, indeed, have been largely drawn upon; seeing that of their own personal knowledge, it was scarcely possible for them not to have been aware how inconsistent some of the statements were with occurrences, which came under their own immediate observation. In the Petition from Scarborough, for instance, which I take because it is the first which was presented this session, I find it stated, to the great regret and alarm of the Petitioners, that there has been a great increase in the entry of foreign vessels, and particularly of vessels from the Baltic, in all the British

ports during the last year. This, Sir, is the grievance complained of by the inhabitants of Scarborough, on the 16th of February, 1827. As far as their own port is concerned, they must naturally be supposed to be, of all persons, the best acquainted with the real state of the case. As far as other ports are concerned, they were probably speaking only from hearsay. Now, by referring to the Returns to which I have alluded, I find that, in the year 1825, there entered into the port of Scarborough nineteen British vessels, amounting to 2,451 tons; and seventeen foreign vessels, amounting to 998 tons. I find also that in the next year, 1826—the year adverted to by the inhabitants of Scarborough—the year in which the foreign shipping has made much alarming progress towards superseding the shipping of this country,—there entered seventeen British vessels, amounting to 2,349 tons, and only two foreign, amounting to 149 tons. So much for the petition from Scarborough! and so much for the practical information which these Petitioners have brought to bear upon the question!

The next Petition I shall refer to is from Greenock—a much larger port than Scarborough. The petition contains the same general allegations, and complains more particularly of the loss of the Timber Trade with the British provinces in North America. It states, that in consequence of the protection afforded to foreign shipping, so decided a preference is given to foreigners in the timber trade, that the Petitioners can no longer compete with them, and that the British trade to Canada will soon be wholly destroyed. How far this allegation is correct, as relates to this particular branch of trade, I shall have occasion to notice hereafter: but, as the Petitioners also proceed upon the assumption, that the increase of foreign shipping has been alarmingly great in the last year, I will shew the House,

from the Returns, to what degree of credit this assumption is entitled. In the year 1825, there entered into the port of Greenock 201 British vessels, amounting to 51,249 tons; and twenty-one foreign vessels, amounting to 6,229 tons. In the year 1826, the number of British vessels was 197, and their tonnage 54,037 tons; while the number of foreign vessels was only eight, and their tonnage 2,380 tons; being an absolute increase in the British tonnage, accompanied by a very great decrease in the tonnage of foreign vessels, in the very port from which the petition proceeded!

Were I to go on to other ports from which Petitions have been presented, I should, in most instances, have to exhibit similar comparisons from similar returns. But this course is unnecessary, and would occupy too much of the time and attention of the House.

There is, however, one more Petition to which I will briefly refer, because it attempts, by exciting the prejudices of the poorer classes of the community, to bring their feelings to bear upon the present question. This Petition comes from the Artificers and Labourers connected with the port of London, and employed, in various departments, about the Shipping. They state that, in the year 1825, they were in a prosperous condition, and had plenty of employment; but that, in the year 1826, owing to the great influx of Foreign Shipping, they are, at this moment, destitute of employment, and in a state of the deepest distress. Now, how stands the fact? I find, by the Returns to which I have just referred, that in the year 1825, the foreign vessels entering inwards in the port of London, amounted to 302,122 tons; and that in the last year—the year 1826—they amounted only to 215,254 tons. If, then, the distress of these Petitioners be occasioned by the amount of Foreign Shipping, the aggregate of that distress ought,

as a matter of course, to have been less, by nearly one-third, during the last year, than during the year 1825. Is it not evident, therefore, that the effects complained of must have arisen out of some other cause? Yet, Sir, these Petitioners are actually "overwhelmed with dismay"—I use their own words—at the increase of foreign shipping in 1826; and to that circumstance they attribute all their present difficulties!

I am afraid I am detaining the House too long; but as it is with assertions of pretended facts that I am dealing, it is necessary for me to exhibit facts, in order to show how entirely groundless are the charges which have been brought against me, and against the System which it is my duty to defend. It is the more necessary, as it has been imputed to me, that I was guilty of exaggeration in the statement which I made last year, and that I attempted to support such statement, and to deceive the public, by Returns, purposely prepared to lead to false conclusions. I have been accused of the "pitiful trick" of jumbling together the Foreign, the Irish, and the Coasting trade, for the purpose of concealing that there had been a great decrease in the British Shipping, employed in the *Foreign* trade of the country. I knew the falsehood of this charge, and so, I have no doubt, did those by whom it was made; but since it had been made publicly, it became my duty, before the House was called upon to discuss the subject in the present session, to call for Returns, prepared in such a form as would remove all suspicion, that I had attempted so miserable and unworthy a delusion. I called, therefore, for the Return, which I now hold in my hand, shewing the comparative increase of British Shipping, in what, in the Custom House books, as kept up to the year 1823, was considered the *Foreign* trade of the country. Up to that year, the trade with Ireland was included under that head.

And why? Because, by a long mistaken policy—a policy which, happily for both countries, is now abandoned—up to that year, we treated the trade with Ireland as a foreign trade, subject to all the impediments and regulations imposed on the intercourse with foreign countries. Therefore, it becomes necessary, for any purpose of fair comparison with years antecedent to 1823, to include the Irish trade under the head of *Foreign*. I hold in my hand a comparison so made, for each year, from 1814 to 1826 both inclusive, shewing the total tonnage of British and foreign ships, which have entered inwards and cleared outwards from and to all parts of the world. And what is the result?—that, with the single exception of the year 1825—(and although the trade of the year 1826 was necessarily depressed, in consequence of the excessive and wild speculations of the preceding year)—there appears to have been a greater amount of British Shipping employed in the last, than in any former year since 1814.

Here, then, is my first proof in refutation of the allegations of the Petitions. Let honourable gentlemen cast their eyes down the column of this Return, from 1814 to 1826,* and they will see, that there is no year,—1825 always excepted—which stands so high, since the restoration of peace. The amount of tonnage of British vessels entered inwards, in the year 1826, was 2,478,047 tons. In the year 1814, it was 1,846,670 tons; shewing an increase of more than 600,000 tons.

But, inasmuch as our intercourse with Ireland is now separated from the foreign trade, and considered, as it ought to be considered, a part of the Coasting trade, a return has been prepared from 1814 to 1826, both inclusive, in which the trade of this country with Ireland is

* Parl. Papers, Session 1827, v. xviii. n. 279.

omitted for the whole of that period.* And here I find the comparison at least as favourable as in the first Return. The tonnage of British vessels entering inwards from foreign ports, in 1826, considerably exceeded the tonnage in any one year since 1814, with the exception of 1825; whilst there are not fewer than four years of the thirteen (three of them before any Treaty of Reciprocity with the Northern Powers), in which the foreign tonnage exceeded that of 1826.

Last year, in addressing the House on this subject, I admitted that, looking to the excessive over-trading of 1825, a proportionate decrease in the employment of British vessels was naturally to be expected in 1826. As the first of these years—1825—from excessive excitement, could not, taken by itself, be considered as affording a fair estimate for the future, so, in like manner, I stated my apprehension, that the latter year—1826—from the natural consequence of preceding excitement, would exhibit an unusual depression in our Navigation. This apprehension, as the House now perceives, has fortunately not been realized. What, then, becomes of the lamentations over the ruin of our foreign trade?—of the bold assertion, that it has been transferred to the shipping of other countries?

The decrease of British Shipping in 1826, as compared with the preceding year, was 231,219 tons: the amount of tonnage in 1825 being 2,027,469 tons, and in 1826, 1,796,250 tons. The Foreign Shipping, in the same period, had fallen off 248,679 tons: the amount of their tonnage, in 1825, being 892,601 tons, and in 1826 only 643,922 tons. Taking the ships entered inwards and cleared outwards, the *positive* decrease in the British was less than that in the foreign shipping by 136,932 tons. If we compare the *relative* decrease in the foreign tonnage, it amounted to

* Parl. Papers, Session 1827, v. xviii. n. 279.

about two-sevenths; while the decrease in the British tonnage was only one-ninth.

This result of the comparative employment of British and Foreign Shipping in the two years 1825 and 1826—the first a year of great excitement, and the second of great depression, in the foreign commerce of this country—is the best answer to the theory so dogmatically laid down by the practical men and their advocates—that henceforward it was only at intervals, "short and far between," during some temporary *flush* of trade, for which Foreign tonnage might not be immediately adequate, that British shipping would be able to procure freights in the foreign trade of this country. This was the explanation of what they could not deny—the great demand, and the extravagantly high freights paid for British ships in 1825. It was the answer of these theorists to the facts stated by me in May 1826; but what will they say to the facts of May 1827? I am afraid there was no *flush* of foreign trade in 1826, which they can call in aid to bolster up their theory of last year.

This, Sir, is my first answer to the Petitioners, as to the increase of Foreign over British Shipping in 1826.

It has been objected to these comparisons that, instead of selecting particular years, I ought to have taken averages, formed upon a certain number of years prior, and subsequent to, the late changes in our Navigation Laws. Those who have made this objection do not scruple to affirm, that these averages would prove their charges against me. My adversaries might have made this comparison for themselves; but, as they prefer dealing in vague assertions, I have done it for them. They will see that I am a disciple ready to adopt their suggestions, and that, by so doing, I am only furnished with a further proof against themselves. I have, therefore, taken the average; first, for a period of five years, subsequent to 1814; secondly, for a

period of ten years from the same date; thirdly, for the last three years, during which the changes complained of have been in operation. The result is as follows:

	British. Tons.	Foreign. Tons.
The amount of tonnage of British and Foreign shipping which entered inwards in the ports of the United Kingdom, upon an average of five years, from 1814 to 1818, both inclusive, was	1,517,918	590,156
The average amount for ten years, from 1814 to 1823, both inclusive, was	1,607,940	539,062
The average amount for three years, from 1824 to 1826, both inclusive, was.....	1,963,678	804,366
The amount of British and Foreign ships entered inwards in the ports of the United Kingdom, for the year 1826, was.....	1,950,630	694,116
The increase of British shipping, therefore, in 1826, as compared with the first average of five years, is	432,712	
Ditto of Foreign		103,960
Excess of British increase above Foreign		328,752
Increase of British on the average of ten years		342,690
Ditto of Foreign.....		155,054
Excess of British increase above Foreign		187,636
Decrease of British on the average of three years		13,048
Decrease of Foreign on ditto		110,250
Excess of decrease of Foreign above British		97,202

I have only to thank my opponents, for having forced me to this mode of comparing the past growth with the present decay of our foreign carrying trade, and I now leave it in their hands, that they, in their turn, may reconcile it, as they can, with their assertion that, since the peace, the increase of foreign, when compared with

British tonnage, has been in the proportion of four to one. I may be told, however, and, if I stop here I have no doubt I shall be told, "All this is very true; but, if from this comparison were excluded the British tonnage which is engaged in carrying on the trade between this country and our own colonies, the result would be found widely different. As foreign competition is not allowed in this trade, the vessels employed in it ought, in fairness, to be excluded from the comparison." My answer is shortly this:

I am perfectly willing to abide the issue of the present question, tried by a reference to this test, new and unfair as I hold it to be in an inquiry of this nature. That it may be strictly applied, I have called for the following Returns:—

First.—An Account shewing the total tonnage of British and Foreign ships, which have entered inwards and cleared outwards from and to all foreign countries in each year, from 1814 to 1826, both inclusive, excluding the British Colonies and Possessions in all parts of the world out of Europe.

Secondly.—A Return of the number of British and Foreign ships, and of the total amount of the respective tonnage, which entered the ports of the United Kingdom from all parts of the world out of Europe (exclusive of the Mediterranean, and exclusive of the British ships from his Majesty's colonies and plantations in America), between the years 1814 and 1826, both inclusive.

Thirdly.—A Return of the total number of loads of timber imported into the United Kingdom in each year, from the year 1784, from the British Provinces in North America and from the Baltic respectively; distinguishing the quantity imported in British from that imported in Foreign ships:—also, a Return of the total number of loads of timber imported into Great Britain in each year, from the year 1784, from the British Provinces in North America, and from the Baltic respectively; distinguishing the quantity imported in British from that imported in Foreign ships:—also, a Return of the total number of loads of timber imported into Ireland in each year, from 1784 to 1826, inclusive, from the British Provinces in North

America and from the Baltic respectively, distinguishing the quantity imported in British from that imported in Foreign ships:—and also, an Account of Duties levied upon timber, deals, and other articles of wood, imported from North America in each of the last three years; and of what would have been paid upon the same articles had they been imported from the Baltic.

Fourthly.—A Return for the United Kingdom, of the total number of British ships, together with the total amount of their tonnage, which entered inwards and cleared outwards from and to his Majesty's colonies and plantations in the West Indies, and on the continent of America south of the 35th degree of latitude, from the year 1814 to the year 1826, both inclusive, distinguishing each year.

Fifthly.—A like Return from his Majesty's colonies and plantations in America, north of the 35th degree of latitude.

Sixthly.—A like Return from the possessions of his Majesty, or of the East-India Company, to the eastward of the Cape of Good Hope, including New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land.

Seventhly.—A like Return from any possessions, settlements, or territories, on the West Coast of Africa, including the Cape of Good Hope.

Eighthly.—A Return of the number of vessels, with the amount of their tonnage, which cleared out from the ports of Great Britain, for the Deep Sea Fishery, to any part of the world, between the years 1814 and 1826, both inclusive, distinguishing each year.

Ninthly.—An Account of the tonnage of vessels employed in the Coasting Trade, which have entered at, or cleared out from, the ports of Great Britain, from the year 1823 to the year 1826, both inclusive.

From this last Return, to which I shall presently have occasion to refer, honourable gentlemen will see whether I can justly be charged with having "jumbled" the Foreign with the Coasting trade, for the unworthy purpose attributed to me. I shall first advert to the other documents, which embrace what, in the strictest sense, may be termed the Foreign trade of the country.

By the Return which I now hold in my hand,* and which, I am sure, will afford my gallant colleague the

* Parl. Papers, 1827, v. xviii. n. 279.

greatest satisfaction, I find the total tonnage of British vessels which have entered inwards and cleared outwards from and to all foreign countries, in the year 1826, excluding the British colonies and possessions in all parts of the world out of Europe, exceeded that of any former year since 1814—always with the exception of the extravagant year 1825. There is not a single year besides, which is not below 1826. This is one evidence, truly, of the total ruin that has befallen our foreign trade! In the year 1814, the amount of British tonnage was 696,691 tons. On the average of the twelve years, including the year 1825, it was 865,377 tons: and, in the last year, it amounted to 934,491 tons

In the tonnage of Foreign ships entering our ports during the same period, there has also been an increase. But there are no less than three years, antecedent to the Reciprocity System, during which the tonnage of Foreign vessels exceeded the tonnage of last year.

But is there in this increase of Foreign Shipping any just ground for regret or alarm? If, in a time of peace, we are increasing our trade in a much greater proportion than our rivals, are we, forsooth, to allow ourselves to be carried away by a miserable feeling of jealousy, and to resort to prohibitory or hostile measures, merely because some augmentation may have taken place, simultaneously, in the trade of the neighbouring countries of Europe? I have looked into this subject with great attention, and have carefully sifted it to the bottom. I have been induced to do so, because I felt, that not only my own reputation, as a public man, was at stake, but—what is of far more consequence than the reputation of any man—that the welfare and safety of the country were involved in the maintenance of our commercial marine.

Of what description of vessels does the House suppose

a great proportion of this increase in the amount of Foreign tonnage to consist? One-fourth of them is under fifty tons burden; and the whole, upon an average, falls short of one hundred tons each. They are chiefly employed in carrying on the daily intercourse from the opposite coast of France, the Netherlands, and other adjacent ports, with this country. This mighty commercial marine may be seen at Dover, Ramsgate, Southampton, Rochester, and the other sea-ports, from Plymouth to Hull, bringing, besides passengers (for all the passage and steam-vessels are included in this Return), eggs, butter, vegetables, poultry, fish, fruit, and other trifling articles which find a market in our sea-ports, and many of which are sent from thence to the markets of the metropolis. Such is the character of about one-fourth of the tonnage which helps to swell the numerical return of Foreign Ships, which threaten to overwhelm the commercial marine of this country! Many of them come with one tide, and return with the next. Is this the nursery for foreign seamen, which is to dislodge us from our rank among the maritime powers of the world? Are the men trained up in this school to be, for a moment, put in comparison with those who navigate our ships to the remotest extremity of the globe? As well might you compare the establishment of a stage-coach plying between Paddington and the Bank, with that of the mail between Edinburgh and London. But if this petty traffic is of little value to the marine of the countries from which it is carried on, and if it ought to be quite as little an object of jealousy to this country, let it not be supposed, that it is not a source of considerable comfort and accommodation to a great part of our population. Gentlemen I am convinced have no notion to what an extent this daily interchange with our neighbours is carried. I will only specify one article. The House will be astonished to hear that,

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during the last year, the number of Foreign Eggs imported into Great Britain was 64,503,790; the duty upon which amounted to 22,416*l.* 3*s.* 3*d.*

There is, Sir, one other article on which I wish to remark, as accounting for the employment of a considerable amount of small foreign shipping. During my unavoidable absence from this House, my right honourable friend, the Vice President of the Board of Trade,* adverted, in one of the discussions on the Corn Bill, to the quantity of foreign Bones imported into this country, for the purpose of manure. The value of this article yearly imported, from the coast between the Scheldt and the Eider, exceeds 100,000*l.* It is collected from all the ports and creeks of that line of coast. Will the Ship-Owners pretend, that they feel any alarm at this trade, in which nearly 40,000 tons of shipping are employed? Would they have a British merchant ship sent to Hamburgh to lay alongside the wharf, waiting to collect a bushel of bones here, and a bushel there, until she was able to complete a cargo of manure? This manure must be a valuable article to our agriculturists, otherwise they would not lay out their money upon old bones. It constitutes a new branch of trade, which can only exist by low freights, and by being managed with the strictest economy. With a system of discriminating and retaliatory duties, this traffic, like many others, would not be transferred to British Shipping, but would be annihilated altogether. Why have I referred to it particularly on this occasion? It is to shew, that if new branches of trade are springing up, in consequence of the removal of their discriminating duties, such trade, even if carried on principally in foreign bottoms, must nevertheless be incidentally productive of advantage to the general interests, as well as to the shipping, of the country. By an advance

* The Right Honourable Charles Grant.

of between one and two hundred thousand pounds expended on this manure, is it too much to presume, that five hundred thousand additional quarters of corn are produced? This corn must be sent to market; and I have no doubt that a great part of it finds its way, by sea, to London, and other great towns; and thus our coasting trade, the most beneficial, as well as the most extensive nursery for seamen is increased.

I now proceed to that part of the subject which relates to the trade with all parts of the world, strictly Foreign, out of Europe. In the year 1814, the amount of British tonnage employed in this trade was 465,809 tons. In the year 1826, its amount was 503,024 tons; exceeding the tonnage of any one year, since 1814, except 1818: whilst, with the single exception of the United States of America, there has been no increase at all, in the amount of tonnage of Foreign vessels trading between this country and ports out of Europe. And even allowing for the increase of American shipping, there are seven years out of the thirteen, from 1814 to 1826, in which the amount of Foreign Shipping entered the ports of this country, from places out of Europe, was greater than in the year 1826.*

I now come to that portion of our Foreign trade which is more immediately under our own control: I mean the trade to the Colonies. And here a heavy charge has been made against me, by my gallant colleague,—that I have gratuitously, unwisely, and unnecessarily opened to the competition of the Shipping of other countries this trade, which had previously been exclusively our own. I admit that the trade of the colonies has been thrown open; but I have the satisfaction of stating to the House, that we have not thereby, in the slightest degree, injured our own trade, or decreased the amount of British Shipping to which it affords employment.

* Parl. Papers, 1827, v. xviii. n. 327.

I will first take the trade with the West-Indies.* In the last year, the amount of British Shipping engaged in that trade was greater than it had been in any year subsequent to the peace, excepting 1814 and 1815; during which years we still retained several colonies which have since been restored to the powers from which they had been taken during the war. In this branch of trade, therefore, the Shipping of this country has suffered no diminution.

Next comes the trade of our North American colonies. I hardly know in what terms to describe its growth. It has increased in a proportion that may truly be called gigantic. Instead of the tonnage employed in it amounting, as it did in 1814, to 88,247 tons, in the year 1826 it had increased to 472,588 tons.† This trade, therefore, has been more than quintupled in twelve years, and exceeds in the last any former year, 1825 excepted, the tonnage of which was 489,844 tons.

In the trade to the British Possessions in the East-Indies, as well as in that to the Coast of Africa, there has been a considerable increase since the restoration of peace.‡ Indeed, I am at a loss to find a single branch of our trade, foreign or domestic, in which there has not been more or less of augmentation, with the exception of the Deep Sea Fishery, in which there appears a trifling diminution.§ This diminution is, however, in my mind, easily and satisfactorily to be accounted for. It must be recollected that, during the war, we had nearly the exclusive possession of this fishery, and supplied all the other nations of Europe with oil. Since the peace, several of those nations have prohibited the importation of Fish Oil. It was not, therefore, to be expected, that we should continue to employ our shipping in that trade so extensively as heretofore.

* Parl. Papers, 1827, v. xviii. n. 300.
† Ibid. v. xviii. n. 276.
‡ Ibid. v. xviii. n. 276.
§ Ibid. v. xviii. n. 277.

Besides, there is another circumstance, as connected with this subject, to be taken into consideration; namely, that the demand for oil has been considerably diminished, in consequence of the new mode of lighting cities and towns with gas, adopted throughout this country.

With regard to the separate trade of Ireland, it is highly gratifying to find, that there has been a considerable increase in her intercourse with all parts of the world, and particularly with the Baltic, and the British Provinces in North America. I rejoice exceedingly at this improvement. I hail the great increase in the consumption of timber in Ireland; not only as it regards the general interests of our maritime relations, but as creating a strong presumption, that an increased proportion of the population of that country possess the means of improving their habitations, and of affording themselves those comforts and enjoyments, to which the use of timber is, in a great degree, conducive.*

I have now, I think, shown in detail, the part which British Shipping enjoys in every branch of our trade, and proved that, in the participation with foreign states, our aggregate share has been increased, instead of diminished, since the change in our navigation laws.

It now only remains for me to refer very shortly, but more specifically, to the timber trade with the Baltic; because, upon the misrepresentations industriously circulated with regard to this trade, the Ship-Owners have endeavoured to bolster up their case. That part of their case, like every other, I am prepared to meet by facts. I have called for a Return of the state of this trade for every year since 1784:† and if any one piece of evidence can be more conclusive than another of the rapid growth of wealth, and

* Parl. Papers, 1827, v. xviii. n. 327. † Ibid. v. xviii. n. 300.

of the general power of consumption in this country, it is to be found in the comparison of the quantity of timber which we now import with the quantity imported in the year 1784. In that year, we received from the British Provinces in North America 739 loads of timber, and from the Baltic 105,227 loads. In the year 1825, the quantity imported from the British Provinces in North America was 407,020 loads, instead of 739 loads; and from the Baltic 272,764 loads, instead of 105,227 loads. So that the increase from British North America in forty years has not been ten-fold, or fifty-fold, or a hundred-fold, but almost a thousand-fold, whilst, instead of there being any proportionate decrease in the supply from the Baltic, that also has been increasing. Every one knows that the whole importation from Canada is exclusively confined to British vessels; so that, even if we did not receive a single plank from the Baltic in British shipping, the Canada trade alone would afford a substitute for the employment of that shipping, to a greater amount than it ever possessed in the Baltic trade.

This new and extensive opening for the employment of our second class Ships, would not leave the Owners of them without resource, even if their most exaggerated prediction —"that, in a few years, they shall be wholly driven out of the timber trade with the Baltic," should be realized. I do not share in this apprehension, for a reason to which I now invite the attention of the House, and especially of the honourable mover and seconder of the present motion.

I have applied to the timber trade with the Baltic that same test which, taunted to it by my opponents, I had applied to the other branches of our trade, I have taken the respective averages of five years, of ten years, and of the last three years, and I have compared these several

averages with the year 1826. The following is the result:—

	In British Ships.	In Foreign Ships.
The average number of loads of timber imported from the Baltic, for five years from 1814 to 1818, both inclusive, was...	49,226	61,803
The average number for ten years, from 1814 to 1823, both inclusive, was.....	54,910	58,904
The average numlyer for three years, from 1824 to 1826, both inclusive, was	100,467	112,482
The quantity imported in 1826, was.....	87,576	68,501

If this result shall prove as satisfactory to those who were the first to call for it, as it is to myself, who have yielded to their call, both sides will be equally gratified. In this case, as in the former instance, I have taken three averages between 1814 and 1826. In all three, the foreign tonnage employed in this trade exceeds that of this country. Let the House compare these averages with the year 1826, in which the proportion of British to the Foreign Shipping is nearly as four to three, and then let them say, whether this comparison warrants the assertion, that we have been deprived of our fair share of this trade by the reciprocity system, or justifies the petitioners in appealing, as they do, to the experience of the last year, as furnishing the proof of that assertion.

I had nearly forgotton one most material part of the present subject: I mean the Coasting Trade; which, like the Colonial, we are enabled to keep entirely to ourselves. It was by "jumbling up" this with the foreign trade of the country, that I was enabled, according to certain sapient gentlemen, to boast last year of an aggregate of British Shipping, entered inwards, amounting to upwards of 2,700,000 tons. I will now tell these gentlemen what

has been the amount of shipping, entered inwards, in the Coasting Trade *alone*, for the last four years.*

In the year 1823 it was 7,899,602 tons.
Do..... 1824 8,101,337
Do..... 1825 8,300,756
Do..... 1826 8,368,812

Such is the amount of our coasting trade—a trade surpassing all others, for the formation of brave and hardy seamen. It is a trade, too, with which the policy of Foreign States can in no way interfere; but which must increase with the growth of the manufactures, the agriculture, the wealth, and the population of the country.

Let the House compare the total amount of this trade with that portion of our intercourse with the continent of Europe, which is carried on in Foreign Shipping. The latter is about 500,000 tons—the former upwards of 8,000,000. Again, let them compare the nature of these two trades, as schools for the formation of experienced and danger-defying seamen. The trade from Norway, and from the Baltic (at least as far as Foreign Ships are concerned) is a fine-weather navigation, carried on during the summer months. The greatest part of the intercourse with the Elbe and the Weser is of the same character. Nearly the whole of the remainder is from the ports of Holland, or those of France within the Channel. When we talk of trade as the nursery of seamen, and the foundation of naval power, will any man place in the same scales any part of this navigation with that which, at all seasons, and in all weather, is carried on between Great Britain and Ireland, and round the coasts of both these islands? Yet it is this Carrying Trade, comparatively insignificant in amount, and of no importance in any other respect, divided

* Parl. Papers, 1827, v. xviii. n. 327.

between six or seven different States in Europe, some of them not possessing, or likely ever to possess, a single ship of war, that is to undermine and destroy the maritime greatness of this country! It is to avert this danger, that we are called upon to persevere in restrictions, which, if retaliated (as we know would be the case), would be ruinous to the interests of our manufactures and our commerce;—and to punish that retaliation, if persisted in, by resorting even to the extremity of war!

There is another speculative grievance much dwelt upon in the petitions now before the House:—the act passed in the year 1825, by which the ports of our colonies were opened, on certain conditions, and within specified limits, to the Shipping and Trade of all friendly nations. For having introduced this act, I have been greatly blamed by the Shipping Interest, and other parties who have joined in their clamour. Having, at the time, fully explained to the House the grounds on which I submitted this measure to Parliament, I will not now revert to them at any length. It is enough for me that, in so far as it affects the British possessions on the continent of North America, this relaxation of our ancient colonial system was recommended, not only on sound commercial principles, but by views of a higher nature, by the lessons of experience, and by considerations of political expediency. The change has been highly gratifying to his Majesty's loyal subjects in these provinces. It cannot fail to contribute to the more rapid growth of their prosperity; and no proof has been offered, none can be adduced, that it has, in the smallest degree, injured any British interest. It is impossible that it should; it is not in the nature of things, that whatever tends to increase the wealth and population of these valuable provinces, should not, at the same time, conduce to the general

prosperity of the Mother Country, so long as they continue a part of the British empire.

It is by liberal treatment, and by admitting the inhabitants of this extensive territory, as much as possible, into a participation of all the benefits of our own navigation and commerce, and not by treating them as we might a small sugar island, interdicted from all intercourse with other countries, that we may expect to ensure their attachment, and to maintain them in a state of colonial connection, alike beneficial both to us and to themselves.

It may be said, however, "whatever good reasons there may be for these measures of indulgence to British North America, why extend them to our sugar colonies in the West-Indies? Surely to them you may prescribe any conditions, however exclusive, which the interests of the Parent State may require. They cannot help themselves, however rigid the rules of monopoly or dependence under which you may place them; and to open their ports, therefore, to the ships of other European nations, was, on your part, a wanton and gratuitous injury done to the Shipping Interest of this country." Admitting that we possess the power which this argument assumes, and without stopping to inquire how far, because one party is weak, and another strong, it is just to exercise such a power, if to the injury of the former, I maintain that, for the protection and security of British property in the West-Indies, for the sake of the commercial interests of this country, and in strict furtherance of the true principles of our Navigation Laws, as those principles were understood and acted upon by our ancestors, the Government of this country was called upon, under the present circumstances of the world, to allow the nations of the north of Europe, subject to the conditions laid down in the Act of Parliament, to trade directly with our sugar colonies.

It is well known that, ever since the separation of the United States of America, the West-Indies have drawn from that country their principal supplies of Lumber, Flour, Biscuit, and other articles of which they stand in need. At first, this intercourse was carried on under orders in council, and was confined to British shipping. But the Government of the United States, by degrees, imposed upon the British ships engaged in this trade such restrictions, that, of late years, they have been nearly excluded from it, and by far the greatest proportion of it has been transferred to American vessels. Yet, so necessary are supplies of this description to our West-India colonies, that, in the year 1822, an Act of Parliament was passed, legalizing the intercourse in American ships; which, till then, had been carried on by connivance, or under the sufferance of temporary orders in council.

The principle being thus established, that our West-India colonies were to be at liberty to draw their necessary supplies from foreign states and in foreign shipping, the questions naturally arose:—Why are the United States exclsively favoured in this respect? Why are the states of Europe to be shut out from attempting a competition in furnishing the like articles? There appeared to me no reason for this exclusion, and many obvious ones why it should not be persevered in.

In the first place, it was reported from all our colonies that the United States, instead of taking, in return for their produce, rum, molasses, and other products of our islands, had ceased to afford this relief to the planters; and that specie, or bills upon England, were, of late years, the only terms of payment upon which American cargoes could be procured. Upon this ground alone, would it not have been worth while to try whether other countries, dealing in like cargoes, would not be satisfied to take in payment a part of

the surplus produce of our colonies? And, at any rate, where could be the mischief of such an experiment?

In the second place, nearly the whole of the supplies from the United States, as I have already observed, were conveyed in American vessels. By an authentic Account, published in the United States, it appears that, in the year 1825, this trade gave employment to 101,604 tons of American shipping—an amount not much short of one-half of the total tonnage in the trade between this country and our West-India colonies. And here it may not be amiss to observe that, by this same Account, it appears, that the whole American tonnage trading to the West-Indies (where the United States do not possess a single colony) exceeds the whole tonnage employed by this country in that trade; —not less than 115,481 tons of American shipping being employed in the trade of Cuba alone. Now, I have always understood that the primary object of the Navigation Laws being to maintain for ourselves a great commercial marine, the next great principle of those laws was to prevent too great a share of the foreign carrying trade being engrossed by any one particular country. Was it, then, a subversion of our navigation system to invite such powers as Prussia, Denmark, Sweden, the Hans Towns, &c. to participate, with the United States, in the trade which we had permitted to the latter with our sugar colonies? Which of those powers is aspiring to raise a commercial marine, to preponderate over that of Great Britain? Which of those states is, year after year, augmenting its military marine, by building ships of war of the largest class? Which of those powers possesses a formidable navy, and is looking forward to the time when it expects to wrest from this country its sway upon the ocean?

In the third place, was it prudent that the supply of our West-India colonies, in articles of first necessity, should

depend upon the good-will of any one power, and that they should be exposed to the risk of all the inconvenience which a sudden interruption of that supply might bring upon them?

These considerations were surely sufficient to induce his Majesty's Government to extend to other powers, the same facility of trading with our Sugar Colonies which had been granted to the United States. In doing so, it became our duty to revise the whole system of that trade. It appeared to us, for reasons which I have stated on a former occasion, that, without prejudice to any British interests, the colonies would be relieved and benefited, by affording a greater latitude to the trade between them and foreign states. To this trade we annexed conditions, alike for the United States and for all other countries. The United States did not think proper to comply with these conditions; and all intercourse between them and the Colonies has, in consequence, ceased. This was their choice in declining our terms; but, since they were declined, I cannot say that, with a view to the interests of our Navigation, I regret the course which the policy of the American Government has forced us to adopt. It is with no unfriendly feeling towards the United States, that I make this statement. There is nothing in what has occurred which ought to give rise to such feelings on either side. They might have enjoyed, like others, the boon which we tendered equally to all, when we opened the trade with our colonies. We have no right to complain that they adhered to terms incompatible with the conditions on which we tendered that boon; neither can they complain, having made their option to decline our conditions, that the boon is withheld from them, and granted to other nations, by which those conditions were accepted.

"But," say the Ship-Owners, "you have done right in shutting out the shipping of the United States from this

trade. It is not of the Order in Council, issued for that purpose, that we complain. Our grievance is, that the interdiction is not equally extended to the shipping of all other countries." Do these gentlemen recollect, that this would be placing our sugar colonies under a more severe system of exclusion, than has been applied to them at any period since the independence of the United States:—a system which in spite of the wishes and policy of the Government, after the close of the first American war, it was found impossible to enforce. To enforce such restrictions now, would be to expose the British sugar colonies to the greatest distress. It is vain to contend that, because we grant to them a monopoly of the British market for their staple productions, they ought in return to draw all the articles, of which they stand in need, exclusively from this country. The monopoly granted to the West-India planter is of little or no advantage to him. By conquests made during the last war, by cessions obtained at the last peace, you have extended your sugar colonies in such a degree, that the quantity which they now send to this country exceeds by 60,000 hogsheads (about one-fifth of the whole supply) the consumption of this country. This excess must be sold in the general market of Europe. The price which it will command in that market, it is obvious, must be regulated by the rate at which other sugars of like quality (those of Brazil, Cuba, and the East-Indies) can be afforded in the same market. It is equally obvious, that the price of this excess must determine the price of the other four-fifths consumed in the United Kingdom. The monopoly, therefore, affords little, if any, substantial advantage to those upon whom it is conferred. They must be able to produce sugar in competition with the foreign grower.

But, if they are exposed to this competition, the House

will at once perceive, that it becomes necessary to afford them every reasonable facility in procuring, at moderate charges, those articles immediately necessary for the cultivation of their estates, which this country cannot supply with sufficient regularity, and except at prices greatly exceeding those which are paid for the like articles in other countries, their rivals in the growth of Sugar. It is the duty of the Government to endeavour to regulate and balance the conditions of this foreign supply, on the one hand, with a reference to this last consideration (in which is involved the well-being of our Colonies); and on the other, to the interests of our own Navigation. It is on this joint principle, that the law of 1825 was framed and submitted to Parliament. I have already shown that, since the passing of that law, there has been an increase, instead of a decrease, in the British Shipping trading to our Sugar Colonies. Of the law, as far as it has hitherto operated, the Ship-Owner, therefore, has no right to complain; and it cannot, I think, be denied by any reflecting man, that, in the present state of our Colonies, we could not adopt towards them a more exclusive system of commercial policy, without the greatest risk of aggravating their present difficulties; and that to aggravate those difficulties, and to involve the planters in ruin, is not the best mode of permanently protecting and upholding the Shipping Interest of this country.

If these considerations cannot be lost sight of in reference to our Sugar Colonies, they apply, still more forcibly, to Newfoundland. The indulgence of trade granted to that settlement has been denounced, in the most severe terms, as amounting almost to criminality on the part of the Government. What is the real state of the case? The value of this Settlement, it is well known, is derived alto-

gether from the Fishery. The right of fishing on the coasts of that island, and in the adjacent waters, is shared with us both by France and the United States. Now, a very inconsiderable portion of the produce of the British fishery is consumed in this country. It is principally sold in foreign markets, where we have to encounter the competition of the Americans and the French, but more especially of the former. Our only chance of sustaining that competition, it has been found by recent experience, depends upon our giving every facility for supplying all the wants of our own fishermen upon the cheapest terms. It is upon this principle that we have allowed a free trade, without duty, to Newfoundland. We had to make our choice between this sacrifice and the loss of the Fishery. By the alternative which Parliament has adopted, some injury, it cannot be denied, is sustained by those trades which heretofore had the exclusive supply of the Newfoundland fishery with articles of British produce. These articles are now furnished from the cheaper markets of the continent. This will be manifest from the Return which I hold in my hand, of the goods exported from Hamburgh to Newfoundland, in the first six months of the last year, consisting of flour, biscuit, salt provisions, &c.* But then this export took place in British ships, amounting to 5,456 tons, which were despatched from this country to Hamburgh for that purpose. This export, therefore, was of no injury to our shipping. That the Newfoundland fishery is one of its best means of encouragement is, I believe, generally allowed; and with this understanding, I think I have now said enough to prove, that the relaxation of our Navigation Laws, in the instance of Newfoundland, was necessary for the preservation of the Fishery, and was made, consequently, in furtherance of the Shipping Interest, however much at

* Parl. Papers, 1827, v. xviii. n. 327.

variance with the rigid regulations and prohibitions of our ancient Navigation and Colonial System.

Another charge which has been adduced against me by the Shipping Interest is, the having opened the ports of British India to foreign ships. This charge is almost too ridiculous to be noticed. Do those who make it, consider the East-Indies as they would some small insular colony, from which they could exclude all the rest of the world? Do they forget that other European nations have settlements on that continent—some of those settlements situated even on the shores of the Ganges itself? To have brought forward such a charge, only proves the monopolizing spirit, as well as the gross ignorance, of those by whom it has been made. This permission to foreign states to trade with British India, instead of being one of the rash innovations of the present day, has existed, I believe, at all times, but certainly ever since the year 1797, when it was specifically provided for and regulated by an act of the 37th of the late King, with a simple reference to which I shall at once dismiss this part of the subject.*

* Copy of East-India Trade Act, 37 Geo. III. c. 117.

"Whereas by an Act passed in the twelfth year of the reign of his late Majesty King Charles the Second, intituled an Act for the encouraging and increasing of Shipping and Navigation, it was enacted, that from and after the first day of December, one thousand six hundred and sixty, and from thenceforward, no goods or commodities shall be imported into or exported out of any lands, islands, plantations, or territories, to his Majesty belonging or in his possession, or which may hereafter belong unto or be in the possession of his Majesty, his heirs and successors, in Asia, Africa, and America, in any other ship or ships, vessel or vessels, than such as do truly and without fraud belong unto the people of England or Ireland, dominion of Wales, or town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, or are the built of and belonging to any of the said lands, islands, plantations, or territories, as the proprietors and right owners thereof, and whereof the master

When it is recollected, that the Tonnage of our mercantile marine was nearly doubled in the course of the last war; that during a great part of that war, but especially

and three-fourths of the mariners at least are English, under certain penalties and forfeitures therein mentioned. And whereas it is expedient that the ships and vessels of countries and states in amity with his Majesty should be allowed to import goods and commodities unto and to export the same from the British territories in India, subject to certain restrictions and regulations: be it therefore enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, that from and after the passing of this Act, and during the continuance of the exclusive trade of the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East-Indies, and during the term for which the possessions of the British territories in India is secured to the said United Company, it shall and may be lawful for the ships and vessels of countries and states in amity with his Majesty, to import into and export from the British possessions in India, such goods and commodities as they shall be permitted to import into and export from the said possessions by the Directors of the said Company, who are hereby directed to frame such regulations for carrying on the trade to and from the said possessions and the countries and states in amity with his Majesty, as shall seem to them most conducive to the interest and prosperity of the said British possessions in India and of the British empire; and no ship or vessel belonging to any of the subjects of states or countries in amity with his Majesty, shall be liable to seizure, confiscation, or forfeiture, or other penalty, for exporting from or importing into the said British possessions in India, any goods or commodities, the importation or exportation of which respectively shall be permitted by the said regulation; any thing in the said hereinbefore recited Act, of the twelfth year of the reign of King Charles the Second, to the contrary notwithstanding: Provided always, that it shall not be lawful for the Directors of the said United Company to frame any regulations for the conduct of the said trade, which shall be inconsistent with any treaty or treaties which shall have been or may be entered into by his Majesty, his heirs and successors, and any country or state at amity with his Majesty, or which

in the latter years of it, there was the greatest excitement to Ship-building; that whilst the profits of freight were very high, little regard was paid to economy in the construction and repair of ships; and that upon the unexpected cessation of the war, between three and four hundred thousand tons were discharged from the public service; it cannot be matter of surprise, that we had more merchant ships than could find profitable employment, under all the changes in our situation produced by the restoration of peace. It must also be borne in mind, that our Merchant Ships were, from that time, no longer subject to the restraints and delays of convoy; and that other nations, of which the navigation had been altogether suspended by the war, not only resumed their former share in the commerce of the world, but began to use every means in their power to increase and promote their Shipping. The wonder is, not that the profits of Ship-Owners have been diminished with the diminution of demand, but that, under all these circumstances, this country has been able to maintain, up to the present time, its mercantile Tonnage, at an amount so very little below that at which it stood at the close of the war. That this is a fact cannot be denied. In my opinion, there would have been a much greater falling-off in our tonnage, and a much greater degree of distress among Ship-owners, if those alterations had not been made in our commercial policy, of which they short-sightedly complain; and it would have been better for their relief, if they had been adopted at an earlier period after the restoration of peace. So far from their being innovations, rash and uncalled-for, I maintain, that they are either the necessary adaptation of our ancient principles to the new

may be inconsistent with any Act or Acts of Parliament which have been passed for the regulation of the trade and commerce of the said British territories in India."

circumstances of the world; or real and substantive improvements, such as would have been made twenty years sooner, but for the general subversion and confusion which grew out of the French war. They are only the following up of those principles of good-will and liberal commercial policy between nations, which Mr. Pitt inculcated, and as far as possible, acted upon, from 1786, till he was forced into war by the progress of the French Revolution. With the restoration of peace to the world, and of a settled order of things in Europe, it was fit, and for the interest of this country, that those principles and that policy should revive. That they were not lost sight of by those who had the greatest interest to see them adopted—I mean the enlightened Merchants and Ship-owners of this country—I could prove, by abundant references to their proceedings, in 1814, 1815, and 1816. I shall content myself with quoting only one important document. I wish those who are now so clamorous against the general Warehousing System, and the other changes in our Navigation and Commercial policy, which became necessary to carry that system into effect, would only read the Letter addressed to the Board of Trade by Mr. Buckle, so early as the 13th of July 1814.* Mr. Buckle was then chairman of the

* Copy of a Letter, dated 13th July 1814, from John Wm. Buckle, Esq. on behalf of the Brazil Committee, to the Lords' Committee for Trade and Plantations, submitting the expediency of certain Alterations of the Revenue Laws, with a view of making this country an Entrepôt.

London, July 13th, 1814.

My Lords:

The very important changes in our commercial affairs which have been produced by the treaties of peace just concluded, having been brought under the consideration of the Brazil Committee, they deem it their duty to submit to your Lordships their ideas upon the effects which the new order of things is likely to produce in the British trade to

Brazil Association of Trade: he has since been chairman of the Ship-Owners' Association. The Letter is too long

and from South America; and upon the expediency of an alteration in the Revenue Laws in respect of the existing restrictions upon, and prohibitions to the importation of certain articles from the continent of Europe.

Your Lordships are well aware that the effect, as was the intention of the Warehousing Acts, has been to make this country an entrepôt for the various articles of trade therein enumerated; and that the advantages thereof have been of the most important nature in every point of view, more especially as they have affected the interests of the Revenue, the Merchant, and Ship-Owner; it will, however, be evident to your Lordships, that the war had a direct and powerful tendency to further that great object, and that this cause having ceased, its influence, so far as depended upon the necessity which the foreign merchant and planter found himself under, of sending his goods to this country, is at an end.

Happily, however, there yet exist some strong inducements to foreigners still to look to England as the country where, in general cases, both sales and purchases may be most advantageously made; and provided that timely measures be adopted to prevent the trade from being diverted into other channels, most confident hopes may be entertained that Great Britain will still continue to be the chief medium of commercial intercourse between all the nations of the world, whereby her payments on the continent of Europe will be materially facilitated.

With a view to this most important object, the Committee would submit to the wisdom of your Lordships, how far it has become necessary to extend the warehousing system to other foreign articles than those which the existing laws permit to be secured or bonded, free of duty, and with the least possible expense, for re-exportation, and which at present almost wholly consist of unmanufactured goods. So long as the war lasted, it was impossible for our late enemies to introduce their manufactures, in any considerable quantity, into the ports of Asia, Africa, or America; but now that every obstacle is removed, and that general tranquillity has been restored to the continent of Europe, the impediments to a direct communication with every part of the world, except to the British settlements (and so long as the

to be read by me on the present occasion; but every sentence of it is well worth perusal. Honourable members

blockade shall last to the United States), are completely removed: and the British manufacturer must therefore look to meet in future with the most active competition in those markets where, except in the occasional exportation of prize goods from hence, he was so lately without a rival.

The foreign European articles, from which it is conceived the most serious competition is to be apprehended, are plain linens, coloured ditto, glass-ware, cambrics, lawns, porcelain, clocks and watches, wrought silks and silk stockings, German hardware.

The first of these (except sail-cloth) may at present be warehoused for exportation, but are subject to duties that, under existing circumstances, operate a virtual prohibition on the importation. Linens form a principal feature in a cargo for the South American markets, and will therefore most certainly find their way direct from the ports of France, Germany, and Holland (unless inducements shall be offered to the previous importation of them into this country), especially as other foreign manufactured goods are to be obtained, of qualities and prices suited to form assorted cargoes for these markets, whereby the British manufacturers would be supplanted in a most serious degree.

But your Lordships will observe, that the evil would not stop here: a cargo of foreign manufactures exported, besides giving activity to foreign capital and foreign shipping, would divert from its present channel the return cargoes of foreign produce that otherwise would be, for the most part, brought in British Shipping; whilst in the event of the requisite inducements being offered them, the foreign merchants of Europe, instead of looking to those distant markets, will have inducements to continue to make Great Britain the emporium of their commeree.

The Committee are not ignorant of the repugnance of the British manufacturers to the introduction, even for exportation alone (as proposed), of articles of foreign manufacture. But, under the circumstances set forth, it is humbly conceived that their objections are founded on an erroneous view of their own interest; not only for the reason assigned, that the foreign manufacture will find its way direct into those places where there is a demand; but because

will find it annexed to the First Report of the Committee on Foreign Trade, made to this House on the 18th of July 1820. The only thing to be regretted is, that the excellent suggestions contained in this Letter were not sooner adopted. I do not mention it as blame to any one, that they were not. I am aware of the prejudices which, in

much of the capital arising from such warehoused foreign manufactures, and from the produce constituting their returns, may be expected to be expended in British goods; especially if, in the commercial treaty about to be formed, the powers of the Continent should agree upon a principle of reciprocity, as is practised in Portugal and Brazil, to admit our manufactures to benefits in their ports, equal to those which it is thus submitted it would be politic to extend to theirs, in the ports of Great Britain.

The Committee beg, in conclusion, to add, that should your Lordships concur in the sentiments which they have thus taken the liberty to lay before you, they submit to your Lordships, that it will be to the last degree important that the system should be acted upon with the least possible delay, and that, when acted upon, it should be with the least possible expense to the merchants sending their goods to this country for sale. The Committee are induced to impress the importance of dispatch with the more earnestness, from having understood that, upon the remonstrance of the manufacturers of Scotch and Irish linens, your Lordships have expressed an opinion that it will be expedient to try for some time whether the effect of continuing the existing duty upon bonded plain linens, will be productive of those injurious consequences contemplated by the importers of foreign linens, and of which such serious apprehensions are entertained by this Committee: who fear that when once the foreign merchant has been driven to find a distant market among the consumers of his goods, it will be then too late to realize those advantages which (unless he is driven to that necessity by our virtually prohibitory laws) may be expected, as the certain results of the immediate adoption of the measures which, with the most perfect deference to your Lordships' wisdom, they have thus felt it their duty to submit to your consideration.

I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) JOHN WM. BUCKLE.

many branches of our manufactures and commerce, stood in the way of the Warehousing System. As far as the manufacturers and merchants were concerned, they have since seen their error; and, owing principally to the exertions and perseverance of my right honourable friend, who with so much ability presided over the Committee of Foreign Trade in this House,* the Warehousing System, and most of the other improvements growing out of the labours of that Committee, have since been carried into effect.

It is not necessary for me, on this occasion, to explain more specifically the nature of these improvements. This duty has been so ably discharged, in the several Reports made by the Committee, and by another Committee which sat on the same subject in the House of Lords, that I shall merely refer to the Reports themselves, not only for the best justification of the measures which they recommend, but as entitling the authors of those Reports to the approbation and gratitude of the country. I may, however, be permitted to observe, that to criticize these improvements as so many insulated measures, without reference to their bearings, the one upon the other, as parts of one connected system, is a most unfair mode of dealing with those Reports. For example, the honourable member for Northumberland has told you of the great boon which has been *gratuitously* granted to Foreign ships, by lowering the Light and Harbour Dues to which they were liable, and of the expense which has been incurred out of the public revenue for that purpose. But, how could we expect to make this country the emporium of the commerce of the world, if these heavy exactions were to be levied from all Foreign vessels visiting our ports; especially if there exist other emporia, equal, or nearly equal,

* Mr. Wallace.

in convenience (Antwerp for instance), where such exorbitant dues are not demanded? Indeed, I am surprised that any gentleman, who has ever looked into the Evidence taken before the Committee on this subject, should for a moment object to the reduction of these charges. They there stand condemned by almost every merchant and ship-owner examined, on grounds more cogent than those of mere commercial policy. It was proved that, from the dread of these enormous dues, Foreign ships, sailing along our coasts, or through the Channel, were deterred, even when in distress, from putting into a British port; that shipwreck, attended not only with the loss of property, but of lives, was frequently incurred in struggling with adverse weather, because the captains of Foreign ships were forbidden by their owners to expose them to the ruinous expense contingent upon seeking shelter from storm, within the inhospitable limits of any English harbour. Is this a state of things, which, for the honour of England, any man is anxious to see revived? If there be such a man, let him read the Evidence a little further, and he will see that, upon the most selfish calculation, there was more lost than gained by this repulsive system. But, as it stands condemned for its inhumanity, I should be ashamed of urging any further argument against it in a British House of Commons.

It may, however, be said, that the discriminating duties upon goods imported in Foreign ships rest upon a different footing from these Light and Harbour Dues; and that, in giving up the latter, there did not exist the same necessity for abrogating the former, under what is called the Reciprocity System. I grant that the necessity was not the same; but if the principle be admitted, that other powers have a right to retaliate these discriminating duties, either upon British goods, or British ships, visiting their

ports;—if the fact cannot be denied, that some of these powers—Prussia in particular—had actually exercised this right of retaliation, and that there was no reason to expect that she would desist from that exercise, or that other States would not follow her example, then I say, that the interests of this country required of us to put an end to this system of commercial hostility, by acquiescing in an arrangement for the mutual abrogation, on both sides, of these discriminating duties.

As I have already, more than once, both officially and in my place in this House, stated the principles which have guided his Majesty's Government in these transactions, I will not now dwell upon them. I shall content myself with noticing one or two mistakes which have been most prevalent upon the subject, among the Ship-owners and their advocates, and which have been more or less pressed into the service of my gallant friend this evening. It has been assumed, that I am the author of the Reciprocity System, and that Prussia was the first Power with which we stipulated for its adoption. I agree with those who have fallen into this error, that if you once consented to the removal of the discriminating duties in respect to one Power, you could not, upon principle, refuse it to other Powers. But when I add, that we stipulated for this removal—first, with Portugal and Brazil in 1810; secondly, with the United States of America in 1815; those who cast all the blame upon the Treaty with Prussia, which was not entered into till 1824, will see how little I had to do with creating either the first or second precedent, whilst they admit that one was sufficient to take away all fair ground for refusing to enter into a like arrangement with all other powers. I am the more glad to have had an opportunity of recalling to the recollection of the House the course of these transactions, as it has been recently

observed, in another place, by one nearly allied to a late noble lord, who held a very prominent situation in the councils and diplomacy of this country from 1810 to 1822, that, during his administration, the Shipping Interest was protected from the ruinous innovations which have since been so rashly introduced into our Navigation Laws, and our Reciprocity Treaties. I can only say, that the two first Reciprocity Treaties were entered into under the administration of that noble lord; that all the changes, without any exception, made in our Navigation Laws, in furtherance of the Reports of the Committee on Foreign Trade (and these include all the principal changes which have taken place,) had his entire concurrence and support in this House, as they had, I believe, of every other member of the Cabinet to which that noble lord belonged. In respect to any further alterations which have been made, either in the laws of commerce or of navigation, since I have held my present office, I boldly affirm, that I am not aware of there being any difference of opinion between my colleagues and myself respecting them; and of this I am quite certain, that they were cordially approved of by my noble friend, till lately at the head of his Majesty's councils.

I have thought this explanation, Sir, just to others, as well as due to myself. In my judgment, all the measures in question were called for by the circumstances of the times in which we live, and by a due regard to the true interests of the country. But, whatever be the merits or demerits of the System which I uphold, I owe it to truth to claim in it no more than my own share. That share consists in having followed, according to the best of my judgment, the path which I found chalked out by Committees of Parliament, and by other and more able men

than myself, who had preceded me in the administration of the commercial concerns of this country.

To revert to the Reciprocity Treaty with Prussia. My gallant friend has talked of it as a gratuitous concession to that Power, for the making of which I had, on a former occasion, justified myself by this childish reason—that without it, "the Shipping of Prussia would have been ruined." A more complete, and, let me add, foolish perversion of any argument never was attempted; and I am only surprised that my gallant friend should have condescended to borrow it from the miserable scribblers on this subject, who have not scrupled to use it out of doors. Does my gallant friend mean to adopt their insinuation, that I sacrificed a great British interest to a morbid feeling of compassion, or,—what some of those hirelings would fain wish to have understood,—to a corrupt sensibility for Prussian Ship-Owners? Prussia issued her edict imposing discriminating duties, not upon British Shipping, as British, but alike upon all Shipping belonging to countries which levied discriminating duties upon the ships or goods of Prussia. Great Britain was not even specifically adverted to in the edict,—neither was it communicated to us at all by the Prussian Government. The communication came from our own minister and consuls, accompanied with the loud complaints of our merchants. We addressed remonstrances to Prussia. Her answer was: "This is a municipal regulation with which you have no right to interfere. The discriminating duties of other countries are *ruinous to our Shipping*. In the port of Dantzig, which, some years ago, had 108 large ships, there now only remain 55 of smaller dimensions. We have followed your example, to protect this remainder from ruin." It was with a reference to this reply that I stated, there was no

hope of procuring the repeal of the Prussian discriminating duties, so long as we persevered in our own.

This reply has been characterized as the "insolent dictation of a petty German prince," to which our rejoinder should have been from the mouths of our cannon, rather than submit to the cowardly sacrifice of any of our commercial monopolies. Those who hold such language, and recommend such expedients, have a very different notion of what becomes the dignity and honour of this country from the feelings which I, and, I trust, those whom I am now addressing, entertain upon this subject. I pass over, as unworthy of notice, the indecorous expression applied to a sovereign in alliance with this country, and with all the great powers of Europe. But I hope I shall never bear any share in the councils of England, when a principle shall be set up, that there is one rule of independence and sovereignty for the strong, and another for the weak;—when, abusing its naval superiority, England shall claim for herself, either in peace or war, maritime rights which she refuses to acknowledge in other States, or shall, under any circumstances, either neutral or belligerent, impose upon others obligations, from which she claims, under the like circumstances, to be herself exempt. To act as if there were one rule of international law for ourselves, and a different rule for other states, would be not only monstrous injustice, but the only course, I verily believe, by which our maritime power could be brought into jeopardy. Such a pretension would call for and warrant a combination of all the world to defeat it; and it is only from such a combination, acting together in a just cause, that this country can have any thing to apprehend.

The same parties, who are so flippant in recommending retaliation and violence against Prussia, tell us, that our Commerce would sustain little or no loss, even if we were

to interrupt all intercourse with that country;—that the whole annual consumption of British produce and manufactures in the dominions of Prussia does not exceed 400,000*l.*; and that, owing to prohibitions and high duties upon our goods, even that paltry amount is diminishing every year. All this statement is founded either in wilful misrepresentation, or the most gross ignorance. Within these few days there has been laid upon the table of the House a document, shewing that the value of British Goods* which entered the Prussian dominions in 1823, instead of being 400,000*l.*, was upwards of seven millions sterling. This Account, it is true, is formed upon the price of the goods at their entrance into Prussia; and is, therefore, necessarily higher than their declared value upon exportation from this country, by the expenses of freight, carriage, insurance, mercantile profit, &c. But the quantity, as well as the value of the goods, is given in the Return, and upon those quantities it is easy to ascertain the English valuation; which, after inquiry, I am warranted in stating would have been at least five millions for that year. The reason of this great difference between the actual Entries of British goods at the Prussian custom-houses, and the declared export from this country direct to the ports of Prussia in the Baltic, is so fully explained in the Prussian document to which I have referred, that it is unnecessary for me to dwell upon it at present. But I cannot help observing that, from the geographical position of the Prussian territories, this power, in a great degree, commands the navigation of the Vistula, the Niemen, the Oder, the Elbe, the Weser, and the Rhine—that is, of all the great water communications by which the productions brought by sea are distributed over Germany, and through most of the central and eastern states of Europe.

* Parl. Papers, 1827, v. 18. n. 326.

But then, Sir, we are told of the Prussian prohibitions against, and high duties upon, British merchandize. What are the facts? First, the transit duties in Prussia are very moderate, not exceeding one-half per cent.: secondly, the duties on the internal consumption of British goods are what we should consider very low—upon most articles fluctuating from five to ten per cent.—upon no one article, I believe, exceeding fifteen per cent.: and, thirdly, there is not, in the whole Prussian Tariff, a single prohibition. I trust that the time will come when we shall be able to say as much for the Tariff of this country. Then, Sir, to crown the whole, it appears by another Document,* laid upon the table within these few days, that, even in the last year, the Tonnage of the British vessels, which sailed from the ports of Prussia, was equal to much more than a moiety of the whole Shipping of Prussia which sailed from those same ports—and yet, in the madness of the spirit of monopoly, we are called upon to go to war, because we have not the other half, and to forego the benefits of a commerce such as that which I have now described! The population of Prussia, in its turn, is crying out for monopolies, and prohibitions against the manufactures and produce of this country. The Government, as we well know, has been beset by these clamours for many years; and if it has not yielded, it is, I am convinced, because it has been expecting (and, as our recent policy has proved, not in vain) rather a gradual relaxation, than the addition of fresh restrictions, in our commercial system. Let the advice of the Ship-Owners be followed, and our commerce would not be long without feeling the baneful result.

I think I have proved, beyond the possibility of contradiction, that, if our Ship-Owners be in a state of distress,

* Parl. Papers, Session 1827, v. 18. n. 327.

it is not a diminution of employment which has brought them into difficulty. It may be, and probably is, that there has been over-building in Shipping, as there has been over-trading in so many other branches of our national industry. I do not believe that there is a greater diminution in the present money-value of Shipping property, compared with its money-value in 1825, than there is, measured by the same standard, in all the fixed capitals vested in our manufactures—than there is in the raw materials consumed, or in the goods created, by those manufactures—than there is in houses and buildings of every description—than there is in the wages of the manufacturing labourers, taken upon an average throughout the kingdom. Among those artisans, whose labour is their only capital, recollect the case of the hand-loom weavers. They tell you, not that the profits of employment are diminished, but that they are thrown out of employment altogether, in consequence of inventions which they could not foresee, when they were brought up to this mode of gaining a livelihood. To those who are thus left destitute and without employment, by no fault of their own, you refuse a Committee; —and will you give it to those who complain, not of want of employment, but only that their employment, from causes which you cannot controul, is comparatively unprofitable? When I say *comparatively*, let it be recollected, that it has been stated in this House, that in 1825 the profits of the Ship-Owners, particularly in the Baltic trade, were very large; and that they, at least, had the good fortune to realize those profits, whilst the extravagant ventures which so much raised freights, have, in almost every instance, left nothing but heavy loss or total ruin, to those who incautiously embarked in them.

As the course of my argument has led me to advert to the suffering and stagnation, which have now existed for

so many months in the manufacturing districts, it will not be irrelevant to the immediate subject of our consideration, if I implore this House to be cautious how it listens to any suggestion, the effect of which might be to raise the cost of the raw materials employed in our principal manufactures. Let them recollect, that England is no longer the only country in Europe, in which the capitals embarked in great manufacturing establishments are considered to be secure—no longer the only country in which commerce and industry are respected, and even honoured by the Government:—that France, which, in 1817, imported only 60,000 bags of cotton, had an import of 216,000 in 1826;—that a formidable rival to our cotton manufacture has recently sprung up in the United States of America, which already boast of consuming nearly one-fourth of the cotton grown in those States—and that, whilst our manufacture of this article is exposed to the growing competition of France and America, it is with great difficulty that we are enabled to keep our ground against the hardware, the woollens, and the linens of the Netherlands and Germany, in the general markets of the world.

It cannot be too strongly impressed upon our minds, that, whatever increases the agriculture, the trade, or the manufactures of the country, must eventually afford increased employment to our shipping; whatever impairs or destroys those great interests, all connected, and dependent as they are, each upon the other, must, at no distant period, and by no doubtful consequences, undermine and weaken our commercial marine.

I could wish these truths to be seriously considered, not by the Ship-Owners, alone, but by others who are equally disposed to find fault with that enlarged system of commercial policy which, recommended from the Throne, has, of late years, been steadily persevered in by Parliament.

There are, I know, gentlemen in this House who condemn that policy; but I have never had the good fortune to hear from them any better argument, or any stronger objection, than is to be gathered from their authoritative declaration—"that they are decidedly against *Free Trade.*" I wish that some of these honourable members—the honourable baronet from Kent—the honourable baronet from Somersetshire—or the honourable baronet from Suffolk, for instance, all of whom must have thoroughly considered this whole question, before they pronounced their judgments against it,—would have the goodness to tell us what they understand by "*Free Trade.*" I think myself intitled to make this claim on their courtesy, if not on my own part, at least on the part of the House; because I have distinctly stated to these honourable members, over and over again, the object, the drift, and the limits of the plan, upon which his Majesty's Government is acting, in respect to all matters connected with our national industry and trade. These honourable members must be aware, that much valuable time is often lost in useless discussions, from want of preliminary explanation. Let them, then, give us their definition of "*Free Trade,*" to which they object, and tell us fairly what is the opposite policy—call it "*fettered Trade,*" or what they please—which they recommend. Are they desirous to limit trade and industry, as formerly, to guilds and corporations? Do they wish them to be confined to chartered companies and monopolies? Are they anxious to restore some thousand or fifteen hundred laws of absurd regulation and vexatious interference, which have been repealed? Is it their object that the most experienced merchant should again be driven to the necessity, in conducting his ordinary business, of having a lawyer always at his side, to construe those confused and discordant statutes;—that, escaping the penalty of one law, he should fall

under that of another, imposing conditions incompatible, or contradictory with the first; and that it should be left to the discretion of the revenue officer, either to punish these contradictions of the law, or to overlook them? In short, let them point out what it is that has been abolished, which they would restore—what it is that is now permitted to be done, which they would no longer permit,—and what (if any thing) not now permitted, they would permit to be done.

An explanation on these points might bring us to a better understanding; and, at any rate, if the three honourable baronets, who are so conspicuously opposed to free trade, would favour us with that explanation, coming from such quarters, it might, by throwing new light upon the subject, tend to enliven a very dry debate.

But, whether these honourable members condescend, or decline, to answer these questions, I do entreat of them, and of others who may be co-operating with them, not to entertain the visionary expectation, that improvement, either in the civil or the commercial policy of the state, can be arrested by their efforts. This country cannot stand still, whilst others are advancing in science, in industry, in every thing which contributes to increase the power of empires, and to multiply the means of comfort and enjoyment to civilized man. This country cannot stand still, so long as there exists a free press out of doors to collect and embody, and a free discussion in Parliament to guide and direct, the influence of public opinion.

When I speak of improvement, I mean that temperate and gradual melioration which, in every complicated and long-settled state of society, is the best preservative and guarantee against rash and dangerous innovation. To improvement of that description it is the duty of each of us to contribute to the utmost of his power. It is by acting steadily upon this principle, that we shall maintain the lofty

position which we now hold in the civilized world. That position, with all the fame and influence which justly belong to it, England has acquired by having hitherto taken the lead in this noble career of usefulness and distinction. In that career we must go forward, impelled by the retrospect of past associations, by a just sense of our present greatness, and by a due regard to the obligations, which both the past and the present impose upon us, towards those by whom we are to be succeeded. If there be any man, either in this House or in this country, insensible to these higher claims of public duty, and to be moved only by sordid considerations, even to that man I would say, that upon the most selfish calculation, England cannot afford to be in arrear of any other nation in the progress of useful improvement.

On the ground that no case has been made out for granting a Committee, I shall feel it my duty to take the sense of the House against the present motion.

Mr. Huskisson sat down amidst loud and general cheering, which continued for some time. When silence was restored, Lord Milton said, he could not add to the detail of those important facts, which had been so ably stated by the right honourable gentleman, but his opinion was nevertheless most decidedly formed, and he trusted the House would not concede the motion. He thought the *animus* and intention of it was to do away with that system of Colonial Commercial Policy, for the introduction of which the country had reason to be grateful. He was of opinion, that the opponents of the right honourable gentleman ought themselves to rejoice that the proposed committee would not be granted them; for after the statement they had heard, they must be convinced that they could not go into an investigation, without having it proved to demonstration that they were in error. Mr. Baring acknowledged, that a case had not been made out; and Mr. Curwen said, that having pledged himself to support the motion he would do so, if it was pressed to a division; although he must confess that it was utterly out of his power to controvert any one fact stated by the right honourable gentleman. General Gascoyne, seeing the feeling of the House, begged leave to be allowed to withdraw his motion.

MR. WHITMORE'S MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE TRADE BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND INDIA.

May 15.

Mr. Whitmore this day moved "That a Select Committee be appointed, to inquire into the Trade between Great Britain and India." After it had been seconded by Mr. Slaney,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose. He began by observing, that his honourable friend had, in a former session, introduced this subject to the attention of the House, by a simple proposition, for an equalization of the rate of duty on East and West-India sugars.* In that simple proposition he could not then concur; and if he now concurred in the present, his honourable friend must perceive, that the object of his former proposition would be as effectually obtained, as if that proposition had been then agreed to. With regard to the threat of a non-consumptive agreement, of West-Indian produce, referred to by the honourable seconder, he could assure that honourable member—and he spoke from experience—that agreements of the description to which he alluded were never attended with the success which was anticipated from them. For though the honourable gentleman had told the House, that the people were prepared to act upon such agreement, the real fact was, that the consumption of British plantation sugars last year had not been less than it was in any former year. Although it was well known that there was every where great pressure in trade last year, the amount paid in as duty on British plantation sugar imported into Great Britain, covering drawbacks and all other charges, was 5,500,000*l.*;—a greater sum than had ever been paid in one year, since our connexion with the West-Indies.

* See vol. ii. p. 196.

He admitted, with the honourable mover, that it was both the interest and the duty of a commercial country like this, to endeavour to open new channels, and to afford increased facilities to those that were already open; but it was likewise its duty, while it gave encouragement to individual enterprize and to new commercial speculation, to be cautious not to sanction any measure which might endanger or destroy established interests and rising institutions; more especially institutions of our own creation, connected with our interests, and especially entitled to our protection. And here, with reference to the low wages of the manufacturing classes at home, to which the honourable gentleman had alluded, he was sure it would afford him great satisfaction to know, that after suffering great and long privations, which they had borne with exemplary patience—(he spoke of Manchester and the extensive manufacturing districts in that quarter)—there was an increased demand at present, which enabled the master manufacturer to give better wages, and a greater number of workmen to obtain employment.

So much for the present prospect of increasing improvement in those parts of the country, in which distress had recently been most severely felt. To proceed to the argument which had been so strongly urged by his honourable friend, as to the application of the principles of free trade to, and the extension of our commercial interests with, India. In the application of those principles, it was not necessary that he should now inform his honourable friend, the House, and the country, that, as far as they could be made beneficially applicable, he readily concurred; but it would be as readily conceded to him, that all extensive changes of this description were attended with great difficulty, and should be proceeded in with circumspection, and with due regard to other general interests already widely

established; and that therefore, whatever new measures or new systems were introduced, they should be regulated in such a manner, as that in endeavouring to effect benefits for one class, they did not more than counterbalance the advantages, by inflicting an injury on some other.

Now, his honourable friend had said, that the East-Indies were rich in all the valuable products that prospered under a tropical climate. Granted. He admitted the capabilities of the climate; but he wished, for the better understanding of this subject, to call the attention of the House to the attitude in which we stood towards the West-Indies, and to the circumstances under which trade was first opened between India and Great Britain. Long before we had establishments in the East, immense capitals had been invested in particular undertakings in the Western hemisphere. Many British subjects had subsequently embarked their capitals under a system which was guarded by subsisting laws. When the trade had regularly opened under the strict monopoly of a company of merchants, what was the export from the East to Europe? Not the raw produce—not sugar, not raw cotton or silk—but the trade regularly consisted of the export of the manufactured article; which this country had to pay for, not in produce or manufacture, but in the precious metals which had been paid for both, as they were exported from England to other parts of Europe. The returns to the East-India trader were therefore, at the period to which he had alluded, made in cash, the produce of goods sold in the European markets. This was the limited course of commerce that had commenced, and was long continued. Meanwhile, in another part of our dominions in the West-Indies, and long before, great wealth had been acquired and accumulated—large interests had been united, and British property, to a considerable amount, had been

invested. Those interests it was our duty to attend to, and they had an equitable claim to our protection.

The East-India trade continued under the same restraints, until the expiration of the Company's charter. In 1814 that Charter was renewed; and then new encouragements were given to individual enterprize, and new means opened to the accumulation of wealth, and the exercise of skill. In the situation which he unworthily filled, he, and those who co-operated with him, had taken every opportunity of giving facilities to, and offering every suggestion that might advance and improve, that trade. It was certainly cheering to observe the beneficial growth of free trade to India, and he had no doubt that it would continue to improve and increase, provided it was not precipitately tampered with. Many encouragements, into the details of which he need not enter, were held out to it; but in all those encouragements and regulations the House should be cautious not to proceed in their relaxation of the old restrictions, to such an extent as to create a well-founded alarm in the minds of the West-India proprietors, to whose interests they were strongly bound, but rather seek to reconcile their interests with those of the East-Indies, by satisfying them, that they might be both augmented and maintained, without unduly interfering or clashing with each other. He thought he could see his way through alterations leading to the benefit of both; but if they were hurried on, or were too forcibly impelled, their advantage would be risked, and his ultimate object defeated.

With reference to what had been said by his honourable friend, on the subject of the monopoly of sugar, he could not help remarking, that that monopoly did not appear to have materially affected the price of the article. The supply of sugar from the West-India islands exceeded by fifty

or sixty thousand hogsheads the whole consumption of the united kingdom, and that surplus must find a vent in the other markets of Europe, where it had to encounter the sugars of Brazil, Cuba, and the East-Indies, and to obtain a price, of course, dependent upon its open competition with them. How was it, if the East-India sugars were so cheaply obtainable, that this surplus of the West-India produce, which was described to be so much dearer in price, could find, as it did, a foreign market? With one single observation he dismissed his honourable friend's remark upon this being a tax for the encouragement of slavery. He was no more partial to slavery than his honourable friend. No man, indeed, could be favourable to a system which was so pregnant with evils; but it was the duty of legislators to remember, that the existing system in the colonies could not be speedily extinguished, without the ruin both of the masters and the slaves. This was the inevitable evil of hurrying forward great changes, before those upon whom they were to operate were duly prepared to encounter them.

To return to the question as to the preferable advantage of importing East-India sugar, he would ask again, why was it not observable in the other ports of the world? A vessel laden with sugar might sail from Calcutta, or from any part of the East-Indies, to Dantzic or Hamburgh, and there enter into competition with the sugar of any other country. If the sugar of the East-Indies possessed such superiority in the cheapness of production and manufacture, how did it happen, that it did not drive out its rivals? Either from the inferiority of the article, or on account of some necessary accompanying increase of freightage, which counterbalanced the cheapness of production, he apprehended that there was some obstacle to this being the case, and that, unless they could convey the sugar as ballast, which must require a corresponding, but improbable,

increase of consumption, the advantages derivable to the East-Indies from an equalization of duties, would by no means realize the expectations of some honourable gentlemen.

Yet, although he could not bring himself to anticipate such great results from the proposed equalization of duties, he was, nevertheless, ready to admit, that there were many points which had been touched upon by his honourable friend, which required attention, and which, he assured him, had engaged much of his time. Some difficulties had recently been removed;—some facilities recently afforded;—the removal and the granting of more were under consideration; and he thought that the consequences of fresh alterations would be more satisfactory, more beneficial, if such alterations were left in their present course, than if placed under the direction of the Committee now moved for. Such had been often the case with respect to alterations in trade, which had met with the approbation of the country, and which had been introduced without having recourse to the appointment of a Committee. He would mention one topic in which such changes, as he had alluded to, might be made with great benefit to the trade of India,—he meant the difference of duty between the raw silk and cotton imported from thence and those of other countries. This was a subject which evidently required reconsideration, and which operated disadvantageously on the East-India trade. He should propose, that these articles should be subjected only to the same duties as those paid by similar articles imported from elsewhere. To obtain the knowledge and information best calculated to effect such alterations with advantage was, perhaps, more easy to him through the official means of intelligence open to him, than through the medium of a Committee. The changes which it was expedient to introduce into the principles of our India

trade, were changes rendered necessary by circumstances, and circumstances must always enter into the consideration of every legislature: by them its determinations must be influenced,—now the relative circumstances of this country and of India commercially considered, had, as every one was aware, undergone of late years a most material alteration: instead of being a country importing manufactures extensively from that part of the world, we now exported extensively to it.

With respect to another part of the speech of his honourable friend—he meant that part of it in which he alluded to the cheering prospect which the number of islands in the Indian Sea held out to us of a great extension of commerce —he had to state, and he did so with feelings of great personal satisfaction, because it was the result of those principles of policy which he had advocated, that Singapore, Penang, and Malacca, were included in those regulations which the East-India Company had consented to adopt. Those ports were now as free and as open as possible; no tonnage or duty of any description being demanded. This was the commencement of a system which, in his opinion, promised the most favourable results. It was infinitely better to look to the future for permanent benefits to be derived from those sources, and to trust to the increased revenue which the growth of their prosperity would necessarily occasion, than to seek for a trifling, temporary advantage, by the imposition of duties which, however small, might have the effect of driving away commerce altogether.

The effect of the system which had been introduced, as far as it could at present be judged of, was most satisfactory; and what might be its ultimate results upon the trade with China, and with the immense population in other parts of the Indian Ocean, no one could anticipate. For his own part, he confessed that he was exceedingly sanguine

upon the subject; and that he looked forward to the most extensive commercial intercourse, under the British flag, between the western parts of America and the eastern parts of Asia. In the mean time, it was the duty of the British government to lay the foundation, to prepare as it were the highway for such an intercourse; and he could assure his honourable friend, that it was a duty of which his Majesty's present government never for a moment lost sight. The only suggestion which he wished to throw out to his honourable friend, was the expediency of postponing an inquiry into this subject, until the result of those experiments, which were already in progress, had more distinctly manifested themselves. He had not the slightest inclination to throw any impediment in the way of eventual inquiry. On the contrary, he was solicitous that it might take place; but it certainly appeared to him, that it was desirable to defer it, until the success of the measures which had already been adopted, and the expediency of extending them, should be more fully ascertained. An investigation of the whole of this vast and important question, at some future period, would, he was convinced, be at once more satisfactory to the House, and more advantageous to the general interests of the state. Not that he differed from his honourable friend on any of the principles which he had advanced. So far from it, he was, as was well known, a warm advocate for the application of those principles, as extensively and as promptly as they could be applied, consistently with what was due to existing rights and interests; but it was because he was persuaded that the present was not the fittest moment for the inquiry, and that, at a future period, when they were in possession of the result of what was now going on, they would proceed to that inquiry with a much greater probability of an advantageous issue that he now advocated delay. The appointment of a com-

mittee now might create alarm, and excite exasperation, at a moment when he was most anxious to shew the parties who were interested, that the alarm was unfounded, and the exasperation uncalled for. However reluctantly, therefore, he was compelled to object to his honourable friend's motion.

There was only one point on which he differed in opinion from his honourable friend; and that was, with respect to his recommendation to throw open to Ireland the trade with India. His honourable friend seemed to consider that such a measure would have the effect of increasing the manufacturing industry of Ireland. Now, he was at a loss to see how such an effect could be produced by such an extension. The probability of the increase of manufactures in Ireland must depend materially and principally on the protection experienced by property in that country, and the advantages thereby secured to those whose interests were connected with manufacturing prosperity. He was happy to say, that a new impetus had begun to be felt in the manufactures of Ireland; and he sincerely trusted that it would increase, and lead to great improvements. Many circumstances induced him to believe that it would do so; but he did not believe that any alteration of the law for regulating the duty on sugar —rather, as he thought, indiscreetly suggested—would have the effect of affording employment to the population of Ireland;—an object, which depended on other and very different circumstances.

He could not trespass any longer on the attention of the House. He had sketched an outline of what appeared to him to be some of the most weighty considerations in this most important subject. He hoped he had given satisfactory reasons for objecting to the appointment of a committee. He trusted it would be understood that he did so,

not because he had the slightest wish to interfere with the progress of improvement, or to prevent the extension of sound commercial principles; but rather because he was convinced,—and he repeated his conviction, that these objects would be best obtained, at present, by abstaining from an enquiry, which would be more beneficially entered upon at a future period. The time must come, and it could not be far distant, when the subject would be ripe for consideration, and when it would be the imperative duty of Parliament to enter into a full investigation of all the circumstances connected with it.

Lord Milton, Mr. Sykes, and Mr. Brougham, expressed their entire concurrence in what had fallen from the right honourable the President of the Board of Trade. Sir Charles Forbes, feeling as he did, the greatest attachment to India, trusted that the question of its commercial interests would be left in the hands of the right honourable gentleman; who, he had no doubt, would deal with it as he was dealing with all other questions of a similar nature. He had the greatest confidence in the right honourable gentleman and in the principles upon which he was acting, and trusted that the honourable member for Bridgenorth would withdraw his motion. Mr. Whitmore expressed his readiness to yield to the recommendation, and to leave the subject altogether in the right honourable gentleman's hands.

WOOL TRADE.

May 28.

Mr. Portman presented a petition from the Wool-growers of Dorsetshire, praying the House "to impose such a duty on the importation of all Foreign Wools, as will for the future insure a fair, steady, and remunerating price to the British grower."

Mr. Huskisson said, that after the judicious opening of the honourable gentleman, he did not think it necessary to detain the House for many minutes upon this subject. The

honourable gentleman had very fairly stated, that he attributed the existing depression to the inordinate importations of the year 1825, and to the reduction in the duty on foreign wool. He confessed, that he looked to another source for the distress of the wool-growers; and that was the pressure on that manufacture, of which the article of wool formed the raw material. Now, if the pressure arose from that cause, it would be rather an odd way—he had almost said an Irish way—of attempting to remove it, by raising the price of the raw material. Yet this was the remedy proposed by this petition, and numerous others of a like description. The progress of the present depression might very easily be traced. In the year 1825, there was a great importation of the article of wool. That importation led to a stagnation in the home market—the invariable consequence of a glut. Hence proceeded a fall in prices, and the subsequent distress of the growers; and this distress he was confident they would aggravate, if they were to take away the only chance which the wool-growers had of an improvement; namely, the foreign demand for the manufactured article.

It could not be questioned, that such a consequence would result from any measure tending to place the British manufacturer in a state more unfavourable to competition than that in which he was placed at present. In 1825, there was a combination of causes, which led to the unfavourable results of that year. The extravagant speculations, not only in wool, but in every other article of commerce, were such, that it was not to be wondered at, if such an enormous importation should have taken place, as to produce stagnation in the market, and subsequent low prices. But it was not only in wool that this fall of prices had occurred; it extended to almost every other article. He had only that morning been looking over a table of

prices, and he found since 1823-4 the fall upon cotton to have been from 18½*d.* to 7*d.*; in sugar, from 45*s.* to 30*s.*; in silk, from 1*s.* 5*d.* to 11*d.*, and in tobacco, and various other articles, in proportion.

The present was not, in his opinion, a proper opportunity for inquiring into the grounds to which those fluctuations might be traced; nor for investigating causes which, at one moment, had led to the extension of particular manufactures, and at another had almost occasioned their annihilation. This depression—which was now clearing off—was not confined to one branch of raw material, but was observable in all those with which the manufactures of this country were concerned. Now, he apprehended that the same causes which operated to lessen the value of other articles used in manufactures, must have equally affected wool; and when those causes ceased, the value of the raw material of wool would be proportionably improved. In 1819, a duty of sixpence per pound had been laid on the importation of wool. Before that time, seventeen or eighteen millions of pounds of wool were annually imported. After 1819, the duty continued pretty nearly the same up to a recent period; and the manufacturers constantly complained, that they were daily losing their export trade; that many branches, in which there had previously been a considerable demand, were falling off and declining, in consequence of those duties;—that they were, in fact, undersold by the manufacturers abroad. The answer made to these representations was this—"If you will consent to a free export of wool of British growth, we will reduce this duty on the importation of that article." In 1824, that argument prevailed. After some discussion in that House, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer succeeded in effecting his object.

And here it might be proper to observe, that between

1819, when the duty of sixpence was imposed, and 1824, when it was modified, the price protected by that duty of sixpence was not a high price, but a price which continued to decline. From 1819 to 1824, the price was constantly declining; but in 1825 it rose again; as indeed every article did at that period. In 1826, the price was once more depressed, and it now remained as low as it was in 1824. But, though it was now depressed in value, as compared with 1825, its present price was considerably superior to that of 1819. Wool which was 11*s.* per tod in 1819, was now from 23*s.* to 24*s.* per tod. The honourable member for Callington,* seemed to think, that long wool only had been subject to the jealous interference of the legislature; but he could assure the honourable member, that, up to a late period, the severe penalties of the law were directed against short wool. The reason of the immense growth of wool abroad was this:—foreigners found that their corn was excluded from this country, and, anxious to procure British manufactures, they applied themselves to the production of that article which they thought they could most readily exchange for those manufactures. With that view, large flocks of sheep were encouraged; and there was, at this moment, four or five times more Merino wool raised in Germany, than was ever before known. It was this change of system that mainly contributed to the depression of the price of short wool. The price of that wool was unquestionably very low at present. It was low in comparison with that of long wool; but long wool now commanded a price double the amount of that which it fetched some years ago; and he thought that any interference with the duty now would have the effect of depriving this country of a very considerable foreign trade. In proof of this, he would read an extract from the last letter

* Mr. Baring.

received by the Board of Trade from Mexico. It was dated the 21st of December, and contained the following passage:—"The imports from Europe are chiefly confined to silk, linen, cotton and woollen manufactures. The silks are imported from France, the linens from Germany—the woollens principally from England and the United States. France also furnishes a considerable quantity of linen. Some branches of the English cloth-trade have declined, as the French are able to undersell us, in consequence of the cheapness of the raw material; but the English broad-cloths have a decided advantage. In that line, the French cannot enter into a competition with us." Now, what would be the consequence if they increased the price of that species of wool which entered into the mixture and composition of every sort of cloth? Would they not thereby deprive themselves of the portion of this foreign trade which they now possessed?

The facts which he had stated were, he thought, sufficient to show the impolicy of placing any additional duty on wool. Looking to the price of wool in 1825, and at present, the duty was equal to twenty per cent. He recollected, in 1825, when the British merchants went "wool-gathering" in every part of Europe; such was their eagerness to purchase that commodity, that the manufacturers on the continent not only did not buy in competition with them, but they actually sold to them the wool which they originally intended to have manufactured themselves. This he knew to be a fact; as he happened to be on the continent at that period for a short time. The wool came to this country at double its ordinary price, and it soon fell fifty per cent. below that ordinary price. It was impossible to prevent this spirit of speculation in a free country like this. All they could do was to lament a system which produced such unfortunate results.

With respect to the duty imposed on the importation of foreign wool into France, it was undoubtedly very considerable. The course was this—(and in explaining it, he meant not to inquire whether it was a wise system or not) —a heavy duty was laid on the wool imported, and an account was opened between the officers of Government and the importer. A drawback greater than the amount of the duty was allowed to the importer, if he proved satisfactorily that he had exported woollen goods equal in value to the quantity of wool which he had imported. This system might answer in France; but it certainly would not suit the complicated machinery of the trade of this country. On the contrary, it would create endless confusion and embarrassment. When they considered the varied manufactures of this country, in which a little foreign wool was mixed with that of English growth, it must appear impossible that such a system could be adopted here. At the same time, he did not mean to condemn that policy with respect to France. He would remind the House, that France and the Netherlands were running this country very hard, with reference to woollen manufactures; and, therefore, if heavy duties were laid on the raw material, it would be giving those countries a great advantage over England. It was clear that such a proceeding must injure the grower, who must, of necessity, suffer if the manufacturer could not purchase. It would be the means of depriving the labourer and the industrious artisan of this country of that employment and remuneration which his exertions deserved. He would tell those who were interested in the success of agriculture, that that system best deserved their support which gave steady, constant, and full employment to the labourer, and which afforded him good and sufficient wages. It was with a view to the establishment of that system that the Government was now acting, and, by properly following it up, they would, he

was quite sure, do infinitely more to promote the agriculture of the country, than by any artificial attempt to force production beyond the fair limits of demand.

MR. DAVENPORT'S MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE DISTRESSED STATE OF THE COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIOUS CLASSES OF THE COMMUNITY.

June 14.

Mr. Davenport moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the Causes of the Severe Distress which has afflicted the Commercial and Industrious Classes of the Community, during the last and present year." After the motion had been supported by Mr. Leicester, Mr. King, Mr. Fyler, and Sir F. Burdett,

Mr. HUSKISSON said, that the motion was for a committee to inquire into the causes of the difficulties which had affected the industrious classes of the community during the last and present year; and in making that motion, the honourable member had gone into almost every topic of political economy, which could afford matter for discussion there, or in any other place; and to these topics each gentleman who had successively addressed the House had added almost every other which could by possibility engage the attention of Parliament.

One of the subjects adverted to by the honourable mover was the measure passed by Parliament, which went to the abolition of one and two-pound notes. The honourable seconder praised that measure; but on many other points, the opinions of the honourable mover and seconder were wide as the poles asunder. Another honourable gentleman, speaking of Ireland, wished this committee, on the 14th day of June, to inquire into the state of the population of Ireland—into the relations between the landlord and tenant in that country—into the mode in which the

landlord oppressed the tenant. The question of emigration, in all its branches, was also to occupy the attention of this committee. Another question which was to be submitted to it, on this 14th of June, was, whether it would be expedient to abandon the Canadas, and separate them from the dominion of the Crown. The Sinking Fund—the Catholic question—and every other possible practical and theoretical question that could occupy the attention of Parliament were also to be submitted to it.

Now, considering the very opposite statements of the gentlemen who had spoken in favour of this Committee, it would be extremely difficult, however desirable it might be, for them to come to a satisfactory decision on the various questions which were to be brought under their consideration.

He well remembered the period to which the honourable mover had alluded, when he (Mr. Huskisson) was regarded as a wild theorist and a dealer in abstract doctrines, on subjects connected with the currency. In the year 1811, he was in a very small minority, which voted that the currency was in a state of depreciation; and it was a little singular, that those who now pressed upon them the consequences of that depreciation, and who exaggerated the effect it had produced on the rent of land, and on the interests of the landowner, were among those who did not, at that time, believe in the existence of the evil. The rent of land had doubled in the last ten years; yet these gentlemen did not, in the year 1811, believe in the diminution of the value of money, but denounced him, and all those who maintained that doctrine, as visionary theorists, and as men altogether unworthy of the respect or notice of the public. It is certain, that the men who now considered themselves infallible, were not among those who perceived the depreciation of the currency, which led to the consequences which had since ensued.

The honourable mover was anxious that the salaries of those whose labours and talents were devoted to the service of the public, should be reduced to the standard of 1792. But if a direct tax was to be levied upon incomes, let it be fairly applied—let every man be required to meet it according to the fair level of his situation in the country—let it be levied equally and impartially upon every species of income. The honourable gentleman had adverted to the low amount of the incomes of persons at that time connected with the Board of Ordnance, as compared with the present salaries. Now, he believed there was not one of the gentlemen connected with that department, who would not be glad to be placed in the situation of those who held similar situations in 1792. The fact was, that although the salaries in 1792 were small, the emoluments derived from fees, which were now abolished, were so considerable, that the whole remuneration greatly exceeded the existing fixed salaries.

With regard to the motion now before the House, it was in reality an attempt to renew the motion made by the honourable member for Essex in 1822. He had, at that time, explained at so much length the grounds upon which he opposed that motion, that he should not trouble the House with a repetition of the arguments which he had then used. If it was wrong in 1822, to depart from the system by which the currency was settled in 1819, it would be much more so to attempt to unsettle that system in 1827. There was no part of his public life upon which he looked back with more satisfaction, than the occasion on which he had opposed the attempt of the honourable member for Essex, to break in upon the system adopted in 1819; by which Parliament was pledged not to make any alteration in the fineness, the weight, and the denomination of the currency. Five years had elapsed since the House had come to that resolution; and they would now, in his opinion,

be guilty of something which would almost amount to insanity, if they were to attempt to alter it. He should, therefore, give his decided opposition to a motion, of which the object substantially was, to introduce a doubt whether Parliament ought to adhere to the standard of currency adopted in 1819.

No measure, in fact, would create more alarm throughout the country, than one which suggested the probability of an attempt, on the part of the legislature, to alter that standard. It was a proposal fatal to all the landmarks of property, and calculated to destroy all the securities upon which the interchange of property was founded. If the honourable baronet, the member for Westminster, could persuade the manufacturing and labouring classes, that in proportion as corn was dear their prosperity would increase; and, at the same time, persuade the agriculturists that a free trade in corn, without any restrictions or prohibitory duty would give them high prices, he would accomplish a very desirable object, and save the House, if not in this, at least in a future session, a good deal of laborious discussion on a subject upon which all were not likely to agree.

Upon these grounds, he should oppose the motion for going into a committee—a motion, in fact, which could hardly be seriously made, considering the short time which was likely to intervene between the present period and the prorogation of Parliament; and of which, if the inquiry were at this time practicable, the only effect would be to throw the whole country into confusion.

Mr. Davenport, finding that his friends and supporters were of opinion that it would be useless to press the motion, begged leave to withdraw it.

CORN DUTIES BILL—THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S AMENDMENT—MR. HUSKISSON'S EXPLANATION.

June 18.

On the 1st of June, the House of Lords being in a committee on the Corn Duties Bill, thé Duke of Wellington moved, as an amendment, "That no Wheat which shall have been placed under bond, to his "Majesty, in any ships or warehouses, after the passing of the Act, "shall be entered for home-consumption, from the ship or warehouse "in which such Wheat shall have been so placed under bond, so "long as the average price of Wheat, as settled by virtue of this "Act, shall be less than 66*s*. per quarter." The amendment was opposed by Lord Goderich, as being at direct variance with the principle of the bill. If adopted, it must, he said, lead to the rejection of it. On a division, the numbers were, contents 78, not-contents 74; leaving a majority of four in favour of the amendment. On the 12th, the report was brought up; when, on the amendment being put, the House divided; for the amendment, 133; against it, 122; leaving a majority of eleven against the Bill as it stood. In consequence of which, on the following day, Lord Goderich announced, that after the decision which their lordships had come to, it was not the intention of ministers to propose the third reading of the Bill.

On the 18th, the House of Commons having resolved itself into a committee on the Corn Trade acts, Mr. Western moved 'the repeal of so much of the Act of the 3d Geo. II. cap. 60, relating to the importation of corn, as renders the provisions of those Acts dependent on the admission of Foreign wheat for home consumption, under the provision of the Act of the 56th of Geo. III. cap. 26.' Upon this, Mr. Canning moved as an amendment, "That any sort of corn, grain, meal, or flour, the produce of foreign countries, and now in warehouse in the United Kingdom, or which may be reported to be warehoused, on or before the 1st of July next, shall be admissible for home consumption at any time before the first of May 1828, upon payment of the duties following." [These were the duties imposed by the Bill passed by the Commons, but not proceeded with by the Lords.]

Mr. Peel, after expressing his intention to vote for the amendment, took occasion to observe, that if any gentleman should think that the

amendment proposed and carried by his noble friend, the Duke of Wellington, was connected with any purposes of a political nature, or still less with any purposes of party faction, he was satisfied such an impression was wholly erroneous. He believed his noble friend had made his proposition on a misconstruction of what had passed between him and his right honourable friend, the President of the Board of Trade. On Mr. Baring's stating, that he could not conceive any thing more absurd in legislation than the noble duke's amendment, Mr. Peel added, that if ridicule was to be applied to the transaction, it equally attached to his right honourable friend, for the assent which he had given to a part of the alteration. Upon which,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and said:—I have, Sir, to request the indulgence of the House in the performance of a very painful but imperative duty. I certainly could have wished that honourable gentlemen had confined themselves strictly to the motion before the House, and that the discussion had not taken the turn which it has taken. My right honourable friend, the member for the University of Oxford, has said that all the ridicule and blame which an honourable member behind me has lavished upon the amendment of my noble friend, attaches in an equal degree to me as it attaches to my noble friend. I will tell my right honourable friend, that however great that ridicule may have been, I would rather bear with it, were it twenty times as great as it is said to be, than that the Amendment should have received the sanction of this House, and worked all the mischief, all the disadvantages, and all the distress which it must inevitably have produced. At the same time, however, I must deny that any part of that ridicule attaches to me. I am answerable neither for the merits nor the demerits of that amendment. It has been said, that I suggested the amendment; but it is quite clear that the noble duke has entirely mistaken the suggestion which I did make to him; and as certain documents connected with

this subject have been alluded to both here and elsewhere, I hope the House will allow me to read some extracts, which will place the matter in a clearer light than it has hitherto appeared in.

Sir, at a late hour on the night of the 24th of last month, on the eve of the day for which the Corn Bill stood for committal in the House of Lords, I received from my noble friend a private communication, which I will now read to the House.

"London, May 24, 1827.

"My dear Huskisson,—I beg you to look at the enclosed clause, and let me know whether you have any objection to its being inserted in the Corn bill, after the clause permitting the entry.

"In my opinion, it will tend to diminish the apprehensions entertained, that the system of warehousing may be abused for the purpose of facilitating and ensuring the results of frauds in the averages; and will tend to induce some to vote for the bill who would otherwise vote against it.

"Let me have your answer as soon as you can. Ever your's, most sincerely,

"WELLINGTON."

The clause which my noble friend enclosed ran as follows:—

"Provided always, that no corn shall be entered for home consumption from any warehouse in any port or place in this kingdom, previous to the entry for home consumption, or to the exportation of every other portion or portions of corn previously lodged in warehouse, in such port or place; without the consent in writing, under the hand and seal of the proprietor of such last-mentioned corn, so long as the average price of corn, within this kingdom, as settled by virtue of this act, shall be less than 70*s.* a quarter."

To this letter of my noble friend I wrote an answer that same night, which I believe my noble friend received early the next morning. In replying to the letter which I thus received, I can assure the House that I communicated with the noble duke in the same spirit in which one colleague

would communicate with another; for in such relation I still supposed myself to stand with my noble friend, as far as that bill was concerned. I did not even keep a copy of the letter which I wrote, and I have to thank my noble friend for the copy of it which I now hold in my hand. This letter has been the cause of all the misapprehension which has taken place, and I must therefore beg to trespass on the House by reading it:

"Somerset-place, May 24, 1827.

"My dear Duke,—I should certainly be disposed to acquiesce in any reasonable concession, which would conciliate some of those who object to the Corn bill in the House of Lords, without risking the loss of the measure when sent back to our House.

"I cannot take upon myself to say, whether the proviso, which I return, would be open to this objection. On other grounds, I am afraid you would find great practical difficulties in the execution of the proposed measure.

"It would give, as I understand it, the power to any *one* proprietor of foreign corn, in any port, to lay a *veto* upon the sale of all corn warehoused subsequent to *his* in that port, until the price reached 70*s*.

"This would put it in the power of *one* individual, by reserving a quantity, however small, of *old* corn, to stop any sale below 70*s*. as effectually as it could be stopped by a positive prohibition under that price.

"Supposing this objection removed, how, at any of the great ports, can you hope to get the consent, in writing, of every proprietor? I have no doubt, that the corn now warehoused in London is the property of at least five hundred firms or individuals, some living in London, some in different parts of England, some abroad. This corn, whilst in bond, is every day changing hands. How can it be satisfactorily certified to the Custom-house, that *all* the consents have been obtained; or how is any party to set about procuring them all, or to know when he has accomplished it?

"There are other difficulties of detail which occur to me. For instance, a party who cannot fulfil the conditions in the port of London, may not find any difficulty in doing so at Rochester, because of corn previously bonded at the latter port there is none. In that case, the London owner may either remove his corn to Rochester,

or import fresh corn from the Continent into that port, and the law would be different in different ports, though possibly very near to one another."

I made these objections in order to show that the proposed clause was really not a practicable, and that even if it had been, it would not be a useful, one. The letter concluded in these words:—

"Had your proposal been, that no corn bonded *after the passing of the present bill* should be allowed to be entered for home consumption till the average price had reached 66*s*., and that *thenceforward* all corn so bonded, or thereafter imported, should come under the regulations of the bill, individually I should not object to such a proviso. It would ensure that *no quantity beyond that now in bond* should be thrown upon the market, unless, in spite of *that quantity*, the price reached a level which might fairly be taken as an indication of our being in want of a further supply from abroad.

"*But I am afraid that even this amendment would prove fatal to the bill, in our House.* I remain, &c.

"W. Huskisson."

Now, Sir, what I meant to state was simply this,—that, up to the price of 66*s*., the corn now actually locked up should have a priority, and that henceforth that and all other corn should be under the regulations of the bill. I had calculated that there were five hundred thousand quarters of corn in bond; which corn might be taken as the representative of so much British capital, a considerable portion of which had, in all probability, been brought here under the authority of measures either already taken or pledged to be taken, and I therefore did think that it was entitled to a priority, up to the price of 66*s*. But then it was merely *pro hac vice*, and possessed nothing of a character approximating to permanency. My intention was to give a preference to this corn, and not to the foreign corn, as has been erroneously stated.

I shall presently pursue the correspondence further, but this I must say,—I shall always look upon it as a matter of

regret that my noble friend, who did me the honour to consult me upon this subject, to take my opinion on one clause, and then, considering my reasons against that clause to be valid and conclusive, did not hesitate to abandon it,—I shall, I say, always look upon it as a matter of regret, that my noble friend did not tell me that he had another clause to propose. If my noble friend had done me that favour, the misapprehension would have been spared, and my noble friend would have been set right. I certainly was never so much surprised as when a friend of mine—not a member of the other House—informed me, on the 2d of June, that the Duke of Wellington had proposed a clause by way of amendment to the corn bill, and that the noble duke had stated that he had my sanction for it. The moment I received this intimation I lost no time in writing to the noble duke, telling him that I had not only been totally ignorant that he was going to propose any clause, but that, if I was rightly informed of the nature of it, I was totally opposed to it. In the same letter I explained to the noble duke the spirit and feeling under which I had communicated with him on the subject of the clause.

And now I will ask my right honourable friend, the member for the University of Oxford, if this be a fair history of the amendment of my noble friend which now forms a part of the bill, how it can possibly happen that I can in the slightest degree be answerable for it,—and upon what ground my right honourable friend can say, that all the objections, and all the ridicule to which this amendment has been subjected, are equally applicable to me as to the noble duke. My noble friend moved his amendment on the 1st of June, when his own individual opinion might have been, that he was correct in citing my authority for the clause; but, on the 2d of June, my noble friend was perfectly aware that he had misconstrued my letter. It

must also be recollected, that from that time nothing more was done with the amendment until the following Thursday. Now, seeing that the noble duke was fully informed that he had misapprehended my letter, and that the clause which he had proposed would be fatal to the bill, if he did not think it of vital importance, why did my noble friend persist in going on with it? Why did he press an amendment which no human being in this House can think any thing but actual destruction to the bill? I can only say, that whatever may have been the reason, the individual who is now addressing the House cannot be made chargeable with the measure. I will not do the noble duke the injustice of taking the merit of it, and I must protest against its being fathered upon me, who had no share whatever in the matter.

I am sorry to trespass so long on the time of the House; but, however inconvenient it may be, I beg to call their attention to the letter which I wrote to my noble friend on hearing that he had proposed his amendment in the House of Lords.

"Somerset-place, 2d June, 10 a. m.

"My dear Duke,—I have this moment heard with great surprise, that in moving an amendment last night on the Corn bill, you urged that amendment as having been *consented* to by me, and that to prove my consent you read a *private* letter, which I had written to you, in answer to one which I had the honour to receive from you on the 24th ult.

"As I did not even keep a copy of that letter, and as your Grace has felt yourself at liberty, without any subsequent communication of any sort with me, to make this *public* use of it, I feel it necessary to request from you a copy of that letter, as without it I cannot enter upon that explanation of my own conduct, which the use that has been made of my letter renders necessary.

"As I have only yet received a very imperfect report (not from any Peer) of what passed last night on your moving the Amend-

ment, this is not the occasion to make any further observations upon the subject.

"I must, however, be allowed to say that, be the amendment what it may, it *had not* my consent; and that if my consent (as is perhaps erroneously reported to me) was urged in any way as a ground for pressing its adoption, I must protest against the authority of my name having been used for that purpose.

"Though I cannot recollect the wording of my private letter, I well know the feelings with which I wrote it. I considered it as strictly *private*, addressed to a colleague with whom I had sat in cabinet upon Lord Liverpool's Corn Bill, who had concurred in that measure, and who was, therefore, considered by me as anxious for its success; and my recollection greatly deceives me if I did not convey to your Grace, that any amendment, such as I now understand to have been carried on your proposal, would be fatal to that measure. I remain, &c.

(Signed) "W. HUSKISSON."

On the same day, I received the following answer:—

"London, June 2, 1827.

"My dear Huskisson,—According to your desire, I send you a copy of your note of the 24th of May, in answer to mine of that date, in which I proposed for your consideration a clause to be proposed to be added to the corn bill, having for its object to prevent the use of the warehouse system to promote frauds in the proposed modes of taking the averages.

"My object in consulting you was to obtain your opinion and sanction for what I proposed to do; and having obtained, instead of your sanction to what I proposed, your suggestion of another measure, I adopted it.

"I showed your note, and the clause which I had drawn in conformity with your suggestion, to Lord Goderich, who, I erroneously conceived, consented to what I intended to propose; and I stated the contents only when he stated his dissent from my proposition, which was in fact your own.

"In respect to the bill being thrown out in consequence of this or any other alteration, that is a matter that depends entirely upon the Government. Ever yours, most faithfully,

"WELLINGTON."

It is quite impossible for the committee not to see, that when the noble Duke thus gave me clearly to understand that the Amendment was mine, I could not do otherwise than send him an explanation. I accordingly wrote to him as follows:—

"Somerset-place, June 2, 1827, 11 o'clock p. m.

"My dear Duke,—Your letter which I received this evening makes me regret extremely that you did not afford me an opportunity of pointing out to you, before the discussion of last night, the wide difference between what is stated in my letter of the 24th ult., as that to which 'individually I should have had no objection,' and your amendment, which, from mistake, you represent as being my own proposition.

"The proposition to which, in my letter of the 24th ult., I stated that I should have had no objection, was in substance this:—to suspend the regulations of the present bill, in respect to any foreign wheat that should be bonded after the passing of the bill, until the average price had reached 66*s.*, and to provide, that *thenceforward* (i. e. after the price should have *once* reached 66*s.*) the provisions of the bill should take effect in respect to all *such* foreign wheat; or, in the words of my letter, that 'it (such foreign wheat) should then come under the regulations of the bill.'

"The effect of your amendment is, that *at no time* shall the regulations of the bill come into operation in respect to *any* foreign wheat bonded after the passing of the bill, whenever the price shall be below 66*s.*

"My proposition obviously contemplates a measure, the extent and limit of which are as follows:—That the wheat now in bond (upwords of 500,000 quarters) should be the only foreign wheat entitled to come into the markets of this country, till the price should have reached 66*s.*; that this price *once* attained, preference should cease; and that all other foreign wheat should *thenceforward* be equally entitled to come in 'under the regulations of the bill'—which regulations enact that it may be taken out of warehouse *at all times*, upon payment of the duties specified in the schedule.

"Your amendment is not a *proviso pro hac vice*, qualifying for a special purpose, and, *according to all probability*, for a very limited time, the general regulations of the bill: but it is a *permanent enactment* directly contravening those regulations.

"Having thus, I trust, made clear the difference between your amendment and the proposition contained in my letter of the 24th, it is only further necessary for me to state the reason which induced me to intimate to you, at the close of that letter, my apprehension that the giving effect to such a proposition would be fatal to the bill.

"I conceived that you would think it better not to risk the fate of this important measure, by proposing any amendment, however much it might be agreeable to some parties, if you were aware that the necessary effect of its being adopted would be to put an end to the measure altogether.

"The amendment which you have carried cannot, I am persuaded, be acceded to by the House of Commons. This is not a matter that depends upon the Government; and you must allow me to add, that were a new bill to be brought in, embracing that amendment, it would be no longer, *even in principle*, the measure agreed to in Lord Liverpool's Cabinet, but one of a very different character.

"W. HUSKISSON."

In answer to this letter, I received one from my noble friend,* lamenting the mistake into which he had fallen,

* The following letter from the Duke of Wellington to Mr. Huskisson, together with Mr. Huskisson's answer, were read in the House of Lords by his Grace on the 25th:—

"London, June 4, 1827.

"My dear Huskisson,—As you say that I misunderstood the meaning of your letter of the 24th, I must have done so. But I certainly never entertained a suspicion that I had misunderstood you, and even now, after referring to my letter of the 24th to you, and examining your letter to me, I cannot but think that I should have sought out for a difficulty, if I had affixed to your letter the meaning which you state that you intended to convey.

"I stated to you an evil, permanent in its nature, resulting from the operation of the warehouse system on that of the proposed corn law; and I proposed a permanent remedy. In answer, you stated very good reasons against what I had proposed, and you tell me, that 'had my proposal been that no corn bonded after the passing of the present bill should be allowed to be entered for home consumption till the average price had reached 66*s*., and that thenceforward all corn

and saying that he could only regret that he found himself bound in duty to persevere in the course which he had

so bonded, or thereafter imported, should come under the regulations of the bill, individually you would not object to such a proviso:' and you add, 'It (this proviso) would ensure that no quantity beyond that now in bond should be thrown upon the market, unless, in spite of that quantity, the price reached a level which might be fairly taken as an indication of our being in want of a further supply from abroad.'

"It thus appears, then, that having stated to you a permanent evil, the existence of which is not denied, I was to consider the word *thenceforward* in an unlimited sense, but applicable to time only, and having no reference to circumstances, notwithstanding what followed in the succeeding sentence of your letter; and I was to believe that you intended I should be satisfied, and that the public should be satisfied, with a temporary remedy for a permanent evil.

"However, I am ready to admit that I did not understand your letter as you have now explained it, and you may rely upon it, that if I could have entertained any doubt respecting your meaning, that I should have gone to you, or have written to you again.

"Lord Goderich must do me the justice to acknowledge, that I put into his hands the proviso which I had drawn, together with your letter. He did not at first understand your letter, and he thought it related solely to corn now in bond; and I begged him to peruse it again. He did so; and he came to me and returned the papers without saying a word. I concluded, therefore, that he concurred in the proposition, which I certainly considered as suggested by you; and I made it to the Committee of the House of Lords in the mode and at the time most likely to be of service to the Government, by preventing a division on a proposition of Lord Rosslyn, which had for its object to lay the duty upon corn upon introduction into warehouse.

"I shall be sorry if this proviso should be inconvenient to the Government; and I must add, that if Lord Goderich had expressed to me a wish that I should delay to propose it till on the report, I should have done so.

"In your letter of the 24th, you spoke with doubt whether the measure proposed by you would occasion the rejection of the bill.

taken. I have now discharged a very painful duty, which I have been called upon to perform, in consequence of the

You write with more confidence on that which has been adopted by the Committee in the House of Lords in your letter received yesterday. But what do you say to the amendments agreed to by the Government in the House of Lords?

"Surely the omission of the word (British) in the second clause, with a view that Scotch, Irish, and foreign corn may be included in the averages, and the alteration of the term of the averages from one to six weeks, will make a material alteration of the duties, and must equally occasion the rejection of the bill.

"You will recollect my opinion upon the measure proposed by Lord Liverpool; to the principle of which, notwithstanding that opinion, I consider myself a party, and I have accordingly supported the Government in every division that has taken place in the House of Lords. I don't consider the amendment as proposed by me to be at all contrary to the principle of Lord Liverpool's measure, which was to protect home agriculture by the levy of a duty on foreign corn imported, and to regulate this duty by the price of corn in England, discovered by averages taken weekly, and not by six weeks' averages. Since Lord Liverpool's plan was formed and agreed upon, a Committee has sat in the House of Lords, before which it has been proved that nothing can prevent frauds in taking the averages, nor the abuse of the existing warehouse system, for the purpose of carrying into execution the objects of those frauds.

"The warehouse system, then, must be reformed; and as Lord Liverpool's principle might exist even if the warehouse system were abolished in relation to corn, or under whatever modification it may be allowed to continue, it is no departure from that principle to adopt a moderate prohibition, applicable only to corn in warehouse, as *the* modification.

"I declare that this impression is so strong upon my mind, and, considering the subject in all its bearings, it appeared to me that the proviso agreed to by the House of Lords so completely met the evil, and was so just towards all parties, you must have calculated it exactly upon the basis of the price of 62*s.* the imperial quarter, and the expenses of carrying corn from the warehouses in Holland to this country.

"Believe me, &c.

"WELLINGTON."

public discussion which has taken place on what passed between me and my noble friend. I will only add, that the

"Eartham, Petworth, 5th June 1827.

"My dear Duke,—I have received by the post of this morning your letter of yesterday's date.

"I regret, on every account, that the proposition which I wished to convey in my letter of the 24th ult. was so stated, as to lead to your misunderstanding my real meaning. So little did I, before last Saturday, contemplate any risk of having been misapprehended, that when I received (whilst in the House of Commons on Thursday evening) the enclosed note from Lord Goderich, I immediately sent him an explanation from thence, to the same effect as that which I have since given to you. I am sure, if Lord Goderich is referred to, that he will do me the justice to confirm this statement.

"From the moment I was informed that you considered your amendment as originating in my suggestion, I was satisfied that there had been some misunderstanding; and as the nature of it is now cleared up, I will not trouble you with any controversial argument upon the true construction of the words which you have quoted from my letter of the 24th. The sentence (indeed the whole of that letter) was hastily written, and, I admit, might have been more clearly expressed; but when, in the latter part of that sentence, I state 'that the regulation to which I saw no objection, would ensure that no *quantity* beyond that *now* in bond should be thrown upon the market, unless, in spite of *that quantity* the price reached a level (namely 66*s.*), which might fairly be taken as an indication of our *being in want of a further supply from abroad*—I must avow myself at a loss to reconcile the construction of words which appear to point to this meaning,—namely, that the specific *quantity now* in bond should be protected against competition with any further supply from abroad, until the average price at home shall have reached 66*s.*, with your proviso, which leaves the supply from abroad free *at all times* to come into the British market, without reference to any average price; whilst it locks up any wheat which may hereafter be bonded in this country, up to the same price as that at which it was the drift of my proposition to keep foreign wheat locked up in the *warehouses abroad*, until the *quantity now in our warehouses* had been disposed of.

high respect which I entertain for my noble friend, and the many personal acts of kindness which I have received at his hands, prevent the existence of any other feeling on my part than that of variance of opinion with my noble

"How then could your amendment and my suggestion be convertible propositions?

"The real truth is, that what was uppermost in my mind when I threw out this suggestion, was the inconvenience which might arise from letting into consumption further supplies of wheat, hereafter to arrive, until the greatest part of the quantity *now in bond* should have been disposed of. The limiting the supply, in the first instance, to the *new* bonded corn, was a question which had been mooted in the Cabinet, if I recollect right, by Lord Westmorland. I own I thought (as I understood him to think) that, within certain limits, there were reasons for giving priority to that corn, before we suffered fresh supplies to come into the market from foreign countries—an arrangement temporary in its nature, but in its operation, by the by, the very reverse of what your amendment contemplates as a permanent system.

"You will, therefore, perceive, that in writing the unlucky paragraph, which is the origin of all this confusion, I was no longer thinking of the 'permanent evil,' your proposed remedy for which I had discussed in the former part of my letter.

"Having no copy of the corn bill with me here, I am quite incapable of forming any opinion as to the effect of the omission of the word 'British' in the second clause of the bill, an amendment of which I was not aware till I received your letter this morning.

"I shall, for many reasons, be sorry if this bill should be lost, and nothing done in respect to our corn laws in the present session of Parliament. But, whatever may be the fate of the bill, or however produced, I never for a moment can doubt, that in the part which you have taken, your anxious object has been to render the proposed measure as free from objection as the nature of the subject, dealing with such complicated interests, and through such a variety of transactions, will admit. I remain, my dear Duke of Wellington, ever faithfully your's,

"W. HUSKISSON."

"His Grace the Duke of Wellington, &c. &c."

friend upon this point. I trust that nothing else exists on his part.

I will now, Sir, make a few observations on the propositions before the committee. I should never have expected that a proposition such as the honourable member opposite has made would have come from that quarter. The House is now called upon to negative all the preceding votes of the session, and to disclaim their own consistency. Surely the honourable member must be aware, that the rule respecting trade in foreign corn is, that it should be admitted under certain occasional regulations and prohibitions. The honourable member, however, seems inclined to make prohibition the rule, and importation merely occasional. The honourable member for Essex seems to think that 70*s*. a quarter is a fair price for corn free of duty. But has the honourable member so far forgotten the views which the House has so lately expressed upon the subject, as seriously to say that up to 70*s*. there shall not be one grain of foreign corn admitted? The honourable member seems, indeed, to imagine, that the House has completely lost sight of a system founded on prohibition, and has determined to adopt a more liberal system than the law of 1815 allowed them to adopt. That law never came into full force except in the years 1816 and 1819, and such were its effects at those periods, that general condemnation and reprobation were felt throughout the country, both by the agricultural and manufacturing interests. The honourable member appears to think it quite consistent with the previous opinion given by a majority of members in this House, that 70*s*. ought to be the price at which wheat might come in at a duty of 17*s*. He proposes as a safe mode of legislation, to lock up all corn in bond, and not to permit it to be imported TILL the price reaches 70*s*., and this he proposes at a period when this House has so lately passed a Bill, in which 62*s*. was stated as a remunerating price.

There is, Sir, another point to which I wish to refer. The honourable member, no later than Thursday last, stated, when dwelling on the subject of the currency, that 60*s.* of the present day was equivalent to 80*s.* of the year 1815. In this opinion I feel disposed to agree; but I ask the honourable member if 60*s.* of the year 1815 is equal to 80*s.* now, what then is his proposal of 70*s.*? Why it is equal by his own showing to 95*s.* of the year 1815. So that his proposition amounts to this—that 95*s.* is the price at which corn may be admitted; with this difference, however, that the law of 1815 admitted foreign corn free of duty, and now, at a price of 95*s.*, a duty of 25*s.* is chargeable upon it. The honourable gentleman, in order to be consistent, ought to have money as cheap as it was in 1815, and then corn would be at the same price that it bore prior to that year. I am warranted in stating, from past experience, that the renewal of the law of 1815 would cause an undue flow of corn into the country. The honourable member must perceive that the price of 83*s.* can no longer be sustained; and he must also see, that to alter the present bill, and substitute the price of 70*s.*, would be to make the measure altogether nugatory. If you adopt the price of 70*s.* you adopt that price which might come into operation under circumstances of great pressure, when the failure of the harvest in this country would render foreign importation necessary; and I have already shown that 70*s.* then was equal to 95*s.* now. Does the honourable member for Essex mean, by this measure, to call into action the system of averages, or does he think it a matter of indifference to the country at large that foreign corn should be shut out for three months longer? As a choice of evils I distinctly prefer the price of 80*s.* to the price mentioned by the honourable member for Essex, because the former price is, in point of

fact, tantamount to a prohibition, and because, under the operations of that law, the system of averages could have no mischievous effect, and would in fact be a dead letter. I perfectly agree with my right honourable friend, the member for the University of Oxford, that it would indeed be a very great misfortune if the country were to remain for an indefinite period without any measure being decided upon with regard to the important question now before the House. The evils which its protraction will create, will not only be felt by the great majority of the people, but the agricultural classes will also feel deeply the misfortune of delay, by which they are precluded from carrying into operation the several agreements into which landlord and tenant had entered to meet the new state of things, and all of which will necessarily remain unsettled by the state in which this law is left.

I feel, Sir, the misfortune of this delay the more, when I reflect on the late period of the session at which a remedy is proposed; and when my right honourable friend says, that it would be better that the House should sit till the end of July, in order to pass some measure of relief, I agree with him that it would be better to do so, if by protracting the session I could hope for such a result. My right honourable friend says, he wishes to see the bill with its amendments passed into a law. In answer to which I can only assure him, that if he will undertake to carry through a measure similar to that which has been rendered useless by the introduction of the noble duke's amendment, then my right honourable friend may be sure of my support. But the amendment proposed by my right honourable friend (Mr. Canning) could have been proposed elsewhere; and I own I feel rather surprised that a noble friend of mine, lately a colleague,* has not proposed such

* Earl Bathurst.

a clause. Really, Sir, after so much discussion, so much deliberation and delay, I can see no chance whatever of passing any bill, unless the House be prepared so far to compromise its consistency, and stultify its own acts, as to adopt an amendment which will have the effect of establishing warehouses in foreign ports, and expose the corn intended for the British market to all the hazard of fluctuating prices, and all the impediments which Foreign Powers, at variance with this country, would be sure to throw in our way. At no time could we adopt such a measure, and therefore I shall give my support to the amendment of my right honourable friend, for I feel that to introduce a measure of a permanent nature would be to subject it to the fate which has attended the bill in the other House. And how can I possibly suppose otherwise, when I reflect that the noble duke gave the measure his sanction when it was first introduced, and opposed it in a subsequent stage, notwithstanding the masterly reply to his objections which was made by a noble friend,* and which met no other answer than this—"Here is our amendment; we know it is fatal to the bill, and therefore we are determined to carry it." Would it not, therefore, be merely exposing the House to a similar result, if any other than a mere temporary measure were now proposed? It is then with regret I confess that a bill similar to that which has been rendered abortive cannot be again introduced,—a bill, which was carried through this House with a triumphant majority, the effects of which would soon have spread throughout the empire, lulling irritation and angry feeling wherever they existed, and which for years past have prevailed in society, in consequence of the unsettled state of this question,—a bill which had awakened the hopes of those whom it was intended to relieve, and which, if it possessed no other merit, would at least have redeemed the

* Lord Goderich.

character of the landed interest from the imputation that, from the year 1815 to the present period, they had shut their eyes and ears to the distresses of their fellow countrymen. That bill has been lost to the country, and I cannot but regret deeply that such has been its fate.

There is, Sir, one other topic on which I am anxious to make a few remarks. It has, I understand, been quoted against me, that I hold the opinion, that England ought not to depend, too largely and too frequently, on other countries for its supply of corn. I maintained that doctrine in 1815. I maintain it now. I think that nothing can be so dangerous to this country as such a reliance on foreign countries for their supplies of corn; but I can conceive a state of things which might be attended with the most dangerous consequences, if such a bill as the one which has been passed by this House does not exist.

I hope I have now stated my reasons fairly. My object is to restore the corn law to what it was in 1773. I am anxious to make this country independent of foreigners, commercially as well as politically; for the committee may rest assured, that so long as it is the interest of foreigners to produce distress in this country, and create political discomfiture, so long will they be increasing in their efforts to do so. It is because I value the independence of the country, and not that I wish to undermine it, that I supported the bill, the loss of which is so generally deplored. With respect to a letter of mine, to which allusion has been made, I disclaim the compliments which have been paid to it. All I will now say of it is, that it was written to point out the manifold impolicy and danger of allowing this country to remain in a state of habitual dependence on others for her supply of corn. Being myself the party who, as a private member of parliament, proposed in 1814 a graduated scale* of prohibitory

* See Vol. iii.

duties, which scale was afterwards matured by the wisdom and experience of Lord Liverpool, it is not likely that I should recommend a principle utterly inconsistent with that suggestion. That principle of averages forms the basis of the very measure, the loss of which I shall always lament, and which I hope, early in the next session, this as well as the other House of Parliament will have the wisdom to repair.

The committee divided: For Mr. Western's motion, 52; for Mr. Canning's amendment, 238.

BATTLE OF NAVARIN.

February 14, 1828.*

Mr. Hobhouse moved, "That the thanks of the House be given to Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Codrington, Commander-in-Chief of his Majesty's Ships and Vessels in the Mediterranean, for his able and gallant conduct in the successful and decisive Action with the Turkish Fleet in the Bay of Navarin, on the 20th of October last." After the motion had been opposed by Mr. Bankes,

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON rose. He began by declaring, himself disappointed with the speech of the honourable

* The following is a list of the Duke of Wellington's administration.

Cabinet Ministers.

Earl Bathurst .....Lord President of the Council.
Lord Lyndhurst.....Lord Chancellor.
Lord Ellenborough .....Lord Privy Seal.
The Duke of Wellington .....First Lord of the Treasury.
Right Hon. Henry Goulburn .....Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Right Hon. Robert Peel ..... { Secretary of State for the Home Department.
Earl of Dudley ..... { Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.
Right Hon. William Huskisson { Secretary of State for the Department of War and the Colonies.

member who spoke last. He was at all times unwilling to address the House unnecessarily, and he had therefore fondly anticipated that the result of the honourable member's speech would be the giving of a conclusive argument against the motion, and would thereby render it unnecessary for him to trespass on their patience. But he was sorry to say that he had not heard from the honourable member one word which appeared to him to bear upon the question before the House. The honourable member had been pleased, in a manner which was not, he thought, altogether consistent with the usual, courtesy of parlia-

Viscount Melville.....President of the Board of Control.
Earl of Aberdeen..... { Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.
Right Hon. Charles Grant ..... { Treasurer of the Navy, and President of the Board of Trade.
Viscount Palmerston .....Secretary at War.
Right Hon. J. C. Herries.....Master of the Mint.

Not of the Cabinet.

H. R. H. the Duke of Clarence ...Lord High Admiral
Viscount Beresford .....Master-General of the Ordnance.
Right Hon. Charles Arbuthnot { First Commissioner of Woods and Forests.
J. Planta, Esq..... } Secretaries of the Treasury.
G. R. Dawson, Esq..... }
Rt. Hon. W. Vesey Fitz Gerald...Paymaster of the Forces.
Duke of Manchester .....Postmaster General.
Right Hon. T. Frankland Lewis { Vice President of the Board of Trade.
Right Hon. Sir John Leach.....Master of the Rolls.
Right Hon. Launcelot Shadwell ...Vice-Chancellor.
Sir Charles Wetherell .....Attorney-General.
Sir N. C. Tindal .....Solicitor-General.

Ministry of Ireland.

Marquis of Anglesey .....Lord Lieutenant.
Sir Anthony Hart.....Lord Chancellor.
Right Hon. W. Lamb.....Chief Secretary.

mentary proceedings, to enter into a discussion upon the merits of our intercourse with France and Russia, and the different steps taken at various periods, with a view to the pacification of Greece. Now, he really thought that, after the House had been told by the Ministers of the Crown the reasons which precluded them—very reluctantly—from giving to the House the information which could alone enable Parliament to come to a just conclusion on the subject, it would have been more fair and consistent to have adhered to the line very properly chalked out by the honourable member for Westminster—to have waved the consideration of the policy of the treaty, and to have confined his attention strictly to the motion which, he could not avoid saying, had been so indiscreetly brought before them.

His honourable friend had said, that the object of the treaty, as he read it, was totally different from that of the protocol which was signed at St. Petersburgh in April, 1826. Now he utterly denied that position. It was necessary to look both to the treaty and to the protocol for the objects of the parties to them, and the motives which influenced the proceedings they had adopted. In both documents the objects which the contracting parties professed to have in view, and which they pledged themselves to effect, were the reconciliation of the Porte with Greece, and the pacification of the Levant. These were the objects which were brought prominently forward. His honourable friend had talked of fraud, conspiracy, trick, and violence; but he certainly could not have read the treaty of the 6th of July attentively, if he had not found that it was framed with the view of re-establishing peace between the contending parties, by means of an arrangement which was called for as much by humanity, as by the interest of the repose of Europe. The first article stated, "The contracting

powers will offer to the Ottoman Porte their mediation, with the view of bringing about a reconciliation between it and the Greeks." It could not, it appeared to him, be doubted, that the object of the contracting powers throughout was the general preservation of the tranquillity of Europe, and the reconciliation of the Porte with Greece. His honourable friend might quarrel with the means adopted to carry the treaty into effect. That point he would not now discuss; but to the assertion, that the object of the treaty was not one of conciliation, he gave a most unqualified denial.

He would not attempt to follow his honourable friend through the arguments which he had raised on this most complicated question. It was sufficient for him to state, that for seven years the peace of Europe had been placed in jeopardy by a war which, if continued, could end in nothing but the extermination of one of the parties; and that a state of things existed which, when his honourable friend came to know all the proceedings of the allied courts, he would be satisfied, if not put down, would interrupt the general tranquillity of Europe, which it was the object of this country particularly to preserve, and which, if once broken, might lead to the most fearful and extensive consequences. His honourable friend had expressed his surprise, how those who pretended to be the disciples of Mr. Pitt, could suppose that they were promoting the interests of England, by venturing upon such an interference with the internal concerns of an independent nation, as the world had seen in the treaty of the 6th of July. Now he professed himself to be one of those humble individuals who took a pride in adopting the policy of that great master mind; and he said, that the policy of this country, not only during the time of Mr. Pitt, but also during the time of Mr. Fox, and indeed during the time of all the distinguished states-

men who had directed its counsels, with reference to its interests being connected with the general peace and tranquillity of Europe, was not to interfere unnecessarily with the domestic concerns of other nations, but certainly not to withhold our interference, whenever it became necessary, to re-establish the peace and harmony of the world, and to restore a good understanding among contending powers. It was no departure from the law of nations, but a sound application of its principle, to interpose under such circumstances, whatever the honourable member for Dorsetshire might urge to the contrary.

His honourable friend had quoted the example of Holland in the year 1787, and had admitted that Mr. Pitt received the approbation of his great rival, Mr. Fox, for his interposition on that occasion. But under what circumstances, he would ask, did that interposition take place? The King of Prussia thought that an insult had been offered by the states of Holland to his sister, the wife of the Stadtholder. Was that, it was asked, a fit object for British interference? Certainly not. But then there was a French faction in the country, which was obtaining a preponderating influence. If that were so, then what became of his honourable friend's principle, that we were not to interfere in the domestic concerns of another, even for the preservation of that balance of power, without which it was impossible to hope for the continuance of peace? Such never had been either the doctrine or the practice of those who had hitherto directed the destinies of England. We had endeavoured never to interfere gratuitously in the internal concerns of independent nations; but whenever we had interposed, our interposition, when ably directed, had always been directed to effect one purpose, and that, the preservation of the peace of Europe. He was quite sure that his honourable friend, when he should hereafter

peruse all the documents connected with, and arising out of, the treaty of the 6th of July, would be convinced, that a war in the east of Europe, which would have placed the tranquillity of the whole of Europe in jeopardy, had been completely prevented by the interposition of England.

He must repeat, over and over again, that he could by no means agree with the conclusion to which his honourable friend wished to bring the House, that the country had been guilty of gross injustice, in acceding to the treaty of the 6th July. He must tell him again, that the object of that treaty, the only end which it was intended to attain, was the same which we had in view, when we signed the protocol of St. Petersburgh—was the same which we had in view, during the time of Lord Strangford's residence at Constantinople, namely, the general pacification of Europe without going to war, and the prevention of that state of things, which, if it once came into existence, must necessarily lead, at one day or other, to a general war throughout Europe. No one, he thought, would expect him to state, on the present occasion, what measures the Government was now adopting to give effect to that treaty. The reasons why he should not enter upon such a statement were too obvious to require repetition. He was therefore certain that it would be enough for him to state, that the Government was proceeding fully, fairly, and faithfully, to execute the treaty, in the same spirit in which it had entered into it in concert with our august allies.

He had stated already, and he would repeat the statement, that he regretted extremely that the honourable member for Westminster had brought forward his motion at this particular time. The honourable member seemed to think that there was a considerable advantage to the public service in having motions of this description—he meant motions for giving the thanks of Parliament to officers and

men who had distinguished themselves in fighting the battles of the country—originated by individuals who were unconnected with the Government, and not fettered by the ties of party. The honourable member had stated, that there were occasions when such honours would be rendered more gratifying to the individuals on whom they were bestowed, by the circumstance of their having been proposed by the party which was in opposition to the Government, and which, therefore, could have had no share in planning the expedition which they had carried to a successful termination. He could not pretend to deny the abstract proposition, that there might be such occasions, but sure he was that the present was not an occasion on which it would be either prudent or politic to make such an experiment as the honourable member for Westminster had recommended to the House. It was impossible for the honourable member to be acquainted with all the circumstances which had reference to this transaction. The honourable member thought himself much better informed respecting them than he really was, for he had stated, among other things, that he knew that the report, which had been made by a gallant friend of his, who had been sent into the Mediterranean to inquire into the circumstances preceding the battle of Navarino, had been perfectly satisfactory upon all points. [Mr. Hobhouse.—I did not say upon all points, but upon most.] I can only say (continued Mr. Huskisson), that if the honourable member for Westminster has that knowledge, his knowledge far exceeds mine. I do not mean by this to say, nor do I wish it to be understood, that there is any thing deficient in the explanation of the transaction, which has been sent home by the gallant admiral who commands in the Mediterranean. But I do say this, that no report has come to my knowledge, or, as far as I am informed, to the know-

ledge of any member of His Majesty's Government, conveying any opinion of my gallant friend to the effect stated by the honourable member. The honourable member assumes that his case is completely established on the report of the gallant officer to whom I before alluded. Now it so happens, that the gallant officer in question was not called on to make a report, and that he has not, as far as I know, made any report.

Before I proceed further into this part of my subject, I cannot help noticing the fact, that the honourable member for Westminster has more than once insinuated, that the great honour which he considers to be due to Sir Edward Codrington, and the gallant men who served under his command, is refused to him, owing to the changes which have recently taken place in the cabinet—owing to some paltry intrigue which he conceives to have been going forward, or, to use his own words, "owing to the better passions having been absorbed by domestic jealousies."

[Mr. HOBHOUSE: I did not speak positively, but hypothetically. I said—If Ministers act so and so towards Sir E. Codrington, people will say so and so of them; and the conclusions to which future historians will come, will be, that the better passions were absorbed by domestic jealousies.]

Mr. HUSKISSON said, he was happy to hear the explanation of the honourable member. He asserted, however, that there never had existed, on the part of any cabinet since the battle of Navarino, any, the smallest, intention to propose the thanks of Parliament to the officers and men who were engaged in that affair. He would tell the honourable member the reason why such an intention could not enter into the mind of any prudent and sensible Minister. It was this:—We voted the thanks of Parliament for triumphs over our enemies—we voted them to mark our satisfaction, that in a

conflict, which we had foreseen and directed, with a power against which we had declared war, the skill and gallantry and zeal of our officers had triumphed over the skill and gallantry and zeal of our enemies—and that they have maintained by that skill, gallantry, and zeal, the ancient superiority of our country above all others. But, could any reasonable man ever think of passing a similar vote on the present occasion, unless a precedent were quoted in justification of it from the records of Parliament? He was ready to maintain, that no precedent could be found which would justify the House in giving a vote of thanks to any officer for a catastrophe which ended in a lamentable effusion of blood which we never intended to shed, and in the total destruction of the naval force of an ally whom we never intended to injure. Would it be right to mark our sense of such an accident, and he might say of such a misfortune,—for being an accident, it was also a misfortune,—by voting the thanks of Parliament to the authors of it,—he said it not invidiously,—as we should vote them for a victory obtained in a time of open and declared war?

The honourable member seemed to think that he had found a case which ran completely parallel with the present, in the vote of thanks which was given to the officers and soldiers who were employed in the expedition which was sent to Copenhagen in 1807. The honourable member felt how weak his argument was on this point; for he laboured exceedingly in endeavouring to draw a distinction between approving the conduct and approving the policy of the war. Now with all due deference to the honourable member, it appeared quite unnecessary to him to draw any such distinction. How many gentlemen were there who disapproved altogether of the policy of the war from its commencement to its close; and who yet, whilst we were engaged in the war, never, when a case arose which called upon Parliament

to acknowledge by its thanks the gallantry of our soldiers and our sailors, thought of mixing up the question of their gallantry with that of the policy which rendered the display of it necessary. He would now ask the House to consider what was the case at Copenhagen. Instructions were distinctly given to our commanders by sea and land to attack and capture that capital, and to use their best exertions for the attainment of that object. They were likewise told, that they were to consider eight days as the utmost extent of the period during which they were to abstain from hostilities. It so happened that, before one of those eight days had expired, the King of Denmark issued a declaration of war against England. He would not now speak of the policy of the expedition to Copenhagen, as the honourable member did not pretend to dispute its wisdom, being now more enlightened as to the grounds on which it was sent out, than the individuals who attacked the justice of it at the time, without knowing any thing of the causes which led to it. It was sufficient for him to say, that what was done at Copenhagen was done in consequence of direct and positive orders from the Government at home, and that we were, moreover, placed in a state of war with Denmark by the declaration of the Danish Government. But was this, or any thing like this the state of affairs between the English and the Turkish Governments in the Mediterranean? No such thing. We were bound by the treaty of the 6th of July to interpose our forces between the contending parties, in order to bring about an armistice *de facto*, in case it could not be otherwise obtained.

He would not enter into the question, whether Ibrahim Pacha had or had not broken the terms of the armistice which had been first made between him and the gallant officer who commanded our squadron. He believed that he had. He would only say, that the gallant admiral did not enter the bay of Navarino with a view of attacking the Turkish

fleet, but with a view of obtaining, by his position, a compliance with the terms of the armistice which he had settled with its commander, Ibrahim Pacha. Upon entering that bay, there ensued a scene in which the greatest skill, seamanship, and gallantry, were evinced by Sir Edward Codrington and every officer and man under his command. It was no small addition to the praise which the gallant admiral had obtained by his valour and skill, that he had effected that, which it was not always easy to effect, when the forces of rival powers were employed together for a joint object, that he had conciliated them by his conduct, and that he had so produced a unity of purpose and a harmony of design, which could not have been exceeded, if the force employed had been entirely British, and under the command of a British officer, as much beloved, as he understood Sir Edward Codrington had the happiness of being by every man who sailed under his orders.

Having made this statement, in which he assured the House that he was most sincere, he hoped that he should not hereafter be accused of underrating either the skill or valour of Sir Edward Codrington, because he could not accede to the present motion. The affair in which he had so eminently distinguished himself, was not a battle between enemies—it was an accident—a misfortune—which could not be foreseen, and perhaps, under the circumstances, could not be avoided: it was an event which, if he were talking of municipal concerns, he should style a chance-medley. He was convinced that it would be so called in the verdict, if a coroner's jury could examine into the merits of it. But it did not follow, that, because it was chance-medley, there might not have been exhibited in it as great gallantry and skill as were ever exhibited by the bravest men in the noblest exploits of either ancient or modern warfare.

The honourable member for Westminster had made another groundless assumption to which he must beg leave to call the attention of the House. He had assumed, that his gallant friend, Sir John Gore, had been sent to make inquiries in the Mediterranean, because a foreign newspaper, the "Austrian Observer," had circulated sundry calumnies detrimental to the conduct and character of the British admiral. He could assure the honourable member, that this was the first time he had ever heard such a reason assigned for sending out his gallant friend. He could further assure him, that no such reason had ever influenced his Majesty's Government. The Government certainly felt that it was incumbent upon it to make further inquiries as to the character of the armistice which had been established in the Morea, between the officer in command of the British squadron, and the officer in command of the Turkish forces. The queries which had been sent out had received distinct and explicit answers. Those queries had been received, and they proved beyond a question, that there had been nothing precipitate or rash in the conduct of the officer commanding the British fleet. He stated this the more willingly, because he was sincerely anxious that Sir Edward Codrington should stand clear of all blame in a transaction which, under the circumstances, was perhaps unavoidable. But he was bound to say, that it was the duty of Government to ascertain, by all possible queries, that such really was the character of the transaction. The honourable member must be convinced, that it was an affair in which the country found much to lament, and that its issue was such as men of all parties could not fail to deprecate, so far as it regarded England; for he would not enter into the feelings of the honourable member, and inquire whether it was a good issue, as terminating hostilities between Greece and Turkey. It might or might not have that effect—time alone would

show. But what was most likely to have been its immediate effect upon British interests? It might have led to the massacre of all the British subjects in the Turkish dominions, and to the confiscation of all their property by the Porte. Fortunately it had not produced that result; but one of its negative effects was undenjable. It had not produced the execution of the objects of the treaty of the 6th of July, as contemplated by those who signed it, and wished it to be executed without the effusion of human blood.

The honourable member for Westminster had next referred to what had taken place when we sent an expedition to Algiers, though I must (said Mr. Huskisson) confess my inability to perceive the manner in which those occurrences can be made applicable to the present subject. I can tell the honourable member, that the gross ignorance which prevailed at Algiers, respecting the extent of our resources and power, did not exist at Constantinople. Though the brother to the Sun and Moon, the lord of the Black, White, and Yellow Seas, the Master of Millions, as the honourable member tells us the Sultan styles himself—may look upon us as a set of traders, who do nothing but sell razors and buy raisins in the Levant, and may call our King the chief of a set of scissor-grinders, I can tell him, though the honourable member has spent some time in Turkey, and I have not, that the Reis Effendi is very well informed of every thing which passes in Europe, and is by no means deficient in the knowledge of European politics. I can tell him further, that if the Reis Effendi was called upon to speak of our expedition to Algiers, he would be able to give the honourable member for Westminster more information respecting it than that which he at present enjoys.

The right honourable Secretary then proceeded to exa-

mine into the history of the expedition sent to Algiers, under the command of Lord Exmouth. The honourable member for Westminster said, that our fleet went to Tunis and Tripoli, and elsewhere, demanding and obtaining from the governors of those places, assurances that they would cease from their old practice of cruising indiscriminately against all Christian flags; that our fleet next went to Algiers, where its demands were met, not with compliance but with refusal; that Lord Exmouth waited a few days before the port, and that he then proceeded to attack and bombard it. Now he had not looked recently at the history of that transaction; but, as far as he recollected it, the true version of it was this:—Lord Exmouth returned from Algiers to England, and reported to the Government, that he had not been able to make the same agreement with the Dey of Algiers as he had made with the other Barbary Powers; for the Dey declared that he would persevere in cruising against the Christian powers, and in holding their subjects in captivity. What then took place? Lord Exmouth was sent back to Algiers with a greater number of ships, and with instructions to compel the Dey to submission. The analogy, therefore, which the honourable member attempted to draw between that case and the present completely failed. In the first case, there was an expedition sent out for a specific purpose—of a hostile nature; that purpose was executed, and Parliament was consequently called upon to praise the skill and gallantry which distinguished those who took an active part. In the present case, the expedition was sent out for a pacific purpose; and out of an unexpected collision with the Turkish fleet arose that victory, which, though it was honourable to our arms, was still not a subject for Parliamentary congratulation.

He was not to be deterred from the strict line of his pub-

lic duty by any appeals that might be made to his feelings, on the nature of the contest which had been so long raging between the Greeks and Turks. Though, as a private individual, he might have a strong opinion as to the character of the contest, and might sympathize with the struggles of a population which had for ages been ground down by the most intolerable slavery; as a public man, he could not yield to the influence of such feelings. He would say at once, that such feelings were not sufficient of themselves to warrant the interference of any foreign state in the contest for the interests of the Greeks alone. If British interests were not endangered by the continuance of the conflict, we were not called upon to interfere,—nay, we were not justified in interfering,—on account of the cruel slavery to which the Greeks had been so long exposed. He was not to be deterred by the honourable member for Westminster saying, that if we did not bestow a vote of thanks on Sir Edward Codrington, we should be unjust not only to him but to ourselves. He contended that the present was an exception from the general rule established in the other cases to which the honourable member had referred. He thought that he had demolished all the precedents which the honourable member had brought forward in support of his present motion; but even if he had not, still there was a wide difference between this case and all such precedents. It would be a bad proceeding to proclaim a triumph, and to indulge in the feelings of victory, where there had been neither an enemy, nor a triumph. He did not doubt the gallantry, he did not mean to dispute the discretion, of Sir Edward Codrington; but he must say to the House of Commons, "Be cautious before you create a precedent of thanks for an event which grew out of an accident, lest officers, looking at the signal benefit conferred on them by receiving such thanks, should be

found prone to cherish too easy a disposition to create such accidents, and lest such accidents so created should lead to consequences which the country may long have reason to rue and to regret."

He was sorry to have detained the House so long on a question which, after all, lay in a very narrow compass. It surprised him more than all, that the honourable member for Westminster, who seemed aware that he should not receive general support to his motion from the sober judgment of the House, and who knew well that if no change had taken place in the councils of his Majesty, no such a proposal as was then before the House would ever have been made to it;—it surprised him more than all that the honourable member, who, from feeling how his case laboured, had searched through the records of Parliament in order to find precedents in which thanks were conferred for brilliant actions like those at Navarino, should have overlooked one slight precedent which made completely against him. The honourable member had referred to the great exploits of the illustrious warrior who was now at the head of the Government, and who had received the thanks of Parliament no less than eleven times for his distinguished services. He believed there was no man who then heard him, who did not rejoice, and feel exceeding glad, that they had so often had an opportunity of thanking that great and able chieftain. He believed that to the exploits which elicited those thanks we were indebted for the liberties of England and the peace of Europe; and he further believed, that it was the intention of that unrivalled captain to maintain by his councils in the cabinet, that peace undisturbed which he had been so instrumental in obtaining by his sword in the field. He was surprised, he repeated, that the honourable member in his researches should have overlooked the little incident which he had

before alluded to. Did the honourable member ever hear of that most distinguished victory, which the British forces achieved at Toulouse? It was one of the most brilliant feats of arms in which the noble duke was ever engaged. He defeated Marshal Soult,—he drove him from an entrenched position, which even his own officers conceived too hazardous to attack; and he displayed, during the whole conflict, a combination of valour, skill, and coolness, which had never been excelled before. But, though this was one of the most gallant achievements of the whole war, it was not noticed by Parliament; because a cessation of arms had taken place before the intelligence of it reached England. In consequence of such unexpected forgetfulness, the late Duke of Norfolk had asked the noble lord, who was at the head of the government in the other House, whether it was not intended to thank the Duke of Wellington for that his last and greatest battle? Unquestionably his noble friend felt that the importance and magnitude of that battle gave the noble duke a title to add another vote of thanks to the numerous votes which he had before received from the gratitude of Parliament. But what was the statement which the noble lord made in his place in Parliament? It was this,—that as the war had ceased, he did not intend to propose a vote, which might tend to keep up a spirit of exasperation between the two natio ns

Having stated that fact, he would now sit down, leaving it to the good sense of the House to decide, whether it would, in this case, create a precedent which, if created, would be attended with inconvenience to the best interests of the country. Had the conflict which gave rise to this proposed vote of thanks taken place with a power with whom we were at war, he should not have had any reluctance, even though it was a barbarous power, to confer the honour of

their thanks upon Sir E. Codrington and his brave followers; but under present circumstances, he was obliged to withhold it, not from any wish to impute the slightest blame to that gallant officer, but from a wish to guard the country from future difficulty and inconvenience. He would not move a negative to the present motion, lest it should be supposed that he meant to deny the gallantry and skill of Sir E. Codrington; but he was sorry to say, that the reasons, which he had stated to the House, convinced him that it was his duty to move the previous question.

The motion was withdrawn.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

February 15.

Mr. Secretary Peel this day moved the re-appointment of the Finance Committee. On the names of the members intended to form the Committee being read, Mr. Baring expressed his surprise at the omission of the right honourable Secretary of State for the Colonies. This struck him as most extraordinary; for without meaning any disrespect to the members composing the Committee, he might say, that the aggregate amount of their financial knowledge bore no proportion to that possessed by the right honourable gentleman. His information and research had penetrated into every corner of our financial and commercial systems, and to except him from the Committee, was to shut out the greatest light that could be thrown upon the subjects to be therein discussed. Mr. Brougham also added his entreaties to those of his honourable friend, and declared, that the knowledge of all the other members combined, was as dust in the balance, compared with the resources which the right honourable Secretary could bring into play.

Mr. Secretary Huskisson said, he considered it necessary to offer a few words, after the manner in which he had been appealed to by the honourable member for Callington,

seconded, as that appeal had been by the honourable and learned gentleman. He certainly had, in the first communication with his right honourable colleague, on the subject of becoming a member of the Committee, declined the proposition, on account of the numerous official avocations which pressed upon him, and occupied nearly the whole of his time. He could assure both the honourable members who had appealed to him, and the House generally, that it was not for want of the most anxious desire on the part of his right honourable colleague, that he did not form part of the Committee. Having, however, for many years of his life, devoted the whole of his time to the public service, so far as his health and strength would permit, he was now willing, if it were in accordance with the feelings of the House, to attend the Committee occasionally, and give so much of his assistance to it, as his health would allow, with all the zeal and ability he possessed. On this, as on all other occasions, he yielded to the expressed wish of the representatives of the people.

Mr. Huskisson's name was accordingly added to the list of the committee.

MR. HUSKISSON'S EXPLANATION OF HIS CONDUCT, IN ITS CONNECTION WITH THE DISSOLUTION OF THE LATE, AND THE FORMATION OF THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION.

February 18.

On the premature death of Mr. Canning, and the consequent formation of Lord Goderich's ministry, Mr. Huskisson, in September 1827, succeeded the noble lord as Secretary of State for War and the Colonies; and on the sudden dissolution of this administration in January, he was induced to retain the situation in the new administration formed by the Duke of Wellington. Upon the meeting of Parliament, an early opportunity was found for requiring an ex-

planation respecting the dissolution of the late ministry, and the establishment of the present. Lord Normanby having this day called the attention of the House to the subject,

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON rose, and spoke to the following effect:—*

Sir, from whatever motives the noble lord may have felt it his duty to make the observations which he has now offered to the House, I beg to return him my very sincere thanks for the manly, straight-forward part which he has performed. He has made upon me that call which I had been assured, day after day, from the hour of my return to this House, was purposely reserved to have been made upon me last Friday. The causes which led to a change in the intentions of those who had expressed their determination to produce from me an explanation of my conduct, whatever may have been my disappointment at such a change, it was not—it is not—for me to surmise; but the noble lord may rest assured, that the contrast between his open appeal and the sort of proceeding on Friday night, especially seeing the use which has since been made of it, will not speedily be effaced from my recollection.

Although I greatly rejoice that an opportunity is this evening afforded me of entering upon an explanation of my conduct, in its connection with the dissolution of the late, and the formation of the present, Administration, I certainly offer myself to your notice under feelings of greater anxiety and embarrassment than I ever before experienced in rising to address this House.

If no other interest attached itself to the transactions, to which I am about to advert, than the protection of my own character and personal honour, from the known indulgence of the House to all its members, under similar circumstances, I should confidently appeal to it; but, Sir, the

* From the notes of Mr. Huskisson.

public character of a public man, and especially when that man is honoured by his Sovereign with the management of one of the highest offices in the state, is not an individual interest: it becomes a public interest. On that ground alone I venture to claim the kind attention of the House, persuaded that it will be afforded me by every man of right feeling, however much he may be opposed to me in the honourable warfare of general or party politics.

Before I proceed further, I find it necessary to state,—and I do it in the most positive and unqualified manner,—that neither directly, or indirectly, have I had any communication, of any sort, with any one of my colleagues in the present Administration, in respect to any thing which I may be reported to have said at Liverpool, or which they, or any of them, or any other person, may have been reported to have said elsewhere, nor in respect to any thing which I may have to say to-night. I trust that honourable members will bear this declaration in mind, during the whole course of what I may have to address to them, and consequently consider that for any thing which may fall from me this evening, I, and I alone, am responsible.

My reason for shunning any such communication has not been want of confidence, or cordial feeling on my part, or any doubt of a reciprocal feeling on the part of the noble Duke at the head of the administration, and of my right honourable friend near me;* but to avoid the possibility of its being supposed that we had, as it is called, compared notes,—that we had concerted and rehearsed together our respective parts. This shyness and reserve may possibly have been mistaken by my noble and honourable friends; but it was a course in which, however inconvenient, I was resolved, until after this explanation, to persevere.

* Mr. Secretary Peel.

I shall now proceed, Sir, to that part of my conduct which has reference to the late Administration; and as I wish to trespass upon the time of the House as shortly as possible, I shall pass over every thing which occurred when, upon my return to England at the end of August, I became a member of that Administration, and begin my statement at that period, when the name of Lord Althorp was first mentioned to me, in reference to the Finance Committee. One single observation, however, I am anxious to make before I proceed to that narrative, and it is this—That I verily believe, from the first moment I became a member of Lord Goderich's Government, up to the hour of its dissolution, that it was impossible for any minister at the head of affairs to maintain a more implicit confidence, and a more friendly, unreserved intercourse towards a colleague, than my noble friend manifested towards me. I am quite certain, that if any thing material was, at any time, done by him without my knowledge, it was the effect of accident, of unintentional oversight, and never from design, or for the purpose of concealment. From my noble friend I received the most frank and unbounded confidence. He had no reserve towards me,—no secrets which he wished to keep from me.

Having discharged this debt of justice and friendship to my noble friend, I now proceed to the facts of the case.

At a late hour of the evening of the 10th of November, I received, in the country, the account which had reached the Admiralty that morning of the unexpected affair of Navarin. The next day I came to town. A few days after my arrival, my noble friend Lord Goderich, while talking with me one morning at his office, upon general business, casually stated in conversation, that my right honourable friend, the then Master of the Mint,* had sug-

* Mr. Tierney.

gested to him, that it might be exceedingly desirable to ask Lord Althorp, whether he would be disposed to undertake the office of Chairman of the intended Finance Committee. My noble friend further told me, that he had had a good deal of conversation with my right honourable friend, in the course of which my noble friend had stated, that from long habits of personal esteem and friendship for the noble member for Northamptonshire, he should be very glad to make use of that noble lord's talents for business in any capacity; but that, as the subjects to which the attention of the committee were to be directed were so connected with this House, he wished rather to consult those members of the administration who had seats in it. My noble friend did not ask me my opinion upon the subject. He merely stated, what had passed between himself and my right honourable friend, the then Master of the Mint; and added, that he considered that the talents and the inclination for business of the noble member for Northamptonshire, must render him well qualified for the situation of chairman of the Committee of Finance. I expressed my doubts on that point; not as to the fitness of the noble member for Northamptonshire for being placed on the committee, for it was impossible that there could be any difference of opinion between my noble friend and myself on that point, but I expressed my doubts, how far the industry and talents of the noble member for Northamptonshire, great as every one acknowledged them to be, had been especially directed to such objects as would qualify him for presiding over a Committee of that nature. To this observation my noble friend replied, "Turn the matter over in your mind;" and so the conversation between us ended. And here I beg to observe, that my noble friend did not state to me whether or not he had made a similar communication to any other members of the administration; nor did he desire

me, or authorise me, to make a similar communication to any one.

A few days after this, at the breaking up of a cabinet dinner, my right honourable friend, the then Master of the Mint, asked me, if I had turned over in my mind the conversation which I had had with my noble friend at the head of his Majesty's Government. I told him, that I had been considering the subject; and that upon the whole, whatever my first impressions might have been, I was then strongly inclined to believe, that it would be for the public interest to endeavour to secure the services of the noble member for Northamptonshire, as chairman of the intended committee of finance. Sir, I considered that conversation, as well as my previous conversation with Lord Goderich, merely as I would the conversation of any two gentlemen, desirous to come to a correct conclusion on a subject on which they had a common object in view. The conversation to which I last alluded took place on the 19th of November. Some days after, my noble friend at the head of his Majesty's Government told me that he had heard from my right honourable friend, the Master of the Mint—that he had been sounding the noble earl,* the father of the noble member for Northamptonshire, respecting the probability that the noble member would accept the situation of chairman of the committee of finance if it were offered to him. There again my right honourable friend undoubtedly adopted a proper course in going to the head of the Government, and telling him what he had been doing. When, however, my noble friend mentioned the circumstance to me, I told him what had passed between my right honourable friend, the Master of the Mint, and myself on the 19th of November. My noble friend then said, "Is the Chancellor of the Exche-

* Earl Spencer.

quer acquainted with this?" I immediately replied, that I did not know whether or not he was acquainted with it; and that I had not been desired, or authorised, to make any communication to him on the subject; but that I took it for granted he had been made acquainted with it. My noble friend said, that if he had not, it was an oversight; I remarked, that it was not my oversight, and that I did not hold myself responsible for it. My noble friend then requested me to see my right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer,* and state to him what had occurred. The next day, my right honourable friend called on me at my office; and I stated to him all that had passed on the subject between me and my noble friend at the head of the Government, as well as between me and my right honourable friend, the Master of the Mint. And here I am bound to say, that when I made that communication to my right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he seemed to take the same view of the case that we had done. We then entered into a discussion on other matters, in the course of which my right honourable friend, the Master of the Mint, quite unexpectedly, and by accident, called on me. I told him what had passed. He said, "I am going to Brighton tomorrow, and under those circumstances I called upon you to talk to you about this very affair of the Finance Committee." We then discussed the subject; compared lists of the members of the intended committee, and, as I supposed, advanced a good deal in the business.

On the next day, however, the 29th of November, I received a communication from my right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressing a wish to see me; and when we met, he informed me that he had some reason to take a different view of the subject from that which

* Mr. Herries.

had occurred to him on the day before, with respect to the person to be appointed chairman of the Finance Committee. He expressed his regret, that the intention of appointing Lord Althorp chairman had become a subject of conversation about town, and he also mentioned, as a great inconvenience, that several other names of the intended members of the committee were publicly spoken of. This my right honourable friend expressed his regret at; and I shared it with him; for unquestionably it is exceedingly improper that matters should be divulged, and made the subject of discussion out of doors, which ought to be strictly confined within the walls of the council-room; more especially under a mixed administration like that which, at the time, existed.

What did I do upon receiving this communication? I wrote off immediately, though it was late in the day when I saw the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to my right honourable friend, the Master of the Mint, at Brighton, expressing my great regret at hearing that these matters had been divulged abroad, and adding my earnest and anxious request, that the best means might be taken to prevent in future the repetition of any such improper disclosures; and, that above all, no other application should be made for any member to be upon the committee, without further consideration; and a copy of this letter I sent, on the same evening to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to show the feeling which I entertained upon these informal statements, and in order, as far as the means were in my power, to allay any unpleasant sensation which might have been raised in my right honourable friend's mind, from what had passed upon this business.

This occurred on the 29th of November; and, on the 2d of December, I received from my right honourable friend, the Master of the Mint, an answer, in which he distinctly stated, that he felt as strong an objection as any man could

feel to these improper disclosures, and felt as anxious a wish that our arrangements and discussions should be unknown, save to ourselves. He further assured me in this letter, that he had never mentioned the name of a single member of the committee; and that with respect to Lord Althorp, we were at perfect liberty, either to put him into the chair of the Finance Committee, or not, as we pleased; and as a proof of this being the case, he enclosed me an extract of a letter which he had received from Lord Althorp, in reply to one transmitted by him to the noble lord, to know whether, in case he should be applied to to become chairman of the committee, he would, or would not, consent to fulfil the duties of the office. The noble lord's reply was, that if my right honourable friend, the Master of the Mint, should, at the proper time, think it his duty to suggest his name for the situation, and the suggestion should meet with the concurrence of the other members of the government, and provided also, that certain arrangements were made respecting the committee, he (Lord Althorp) should not feel himself indisposed to accept the chairmanship. So that, up to the time to which I am refering, the nomination of Lord Althorp, so far from being a complete and determined act, was unsettled and conditional, and remained merely as a topic which had been handled in casual conversation. On the day of my receiving this answer from Brighton, I transmitted it under cover to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who subsequently returned it to me unaccompanied by a single observation. This is the whole of the correspondence,—this the whole of what passed concerning the nomination of Lord Althorp—as far as I am informed or concerned.

I beg, Sir, to add fairly and honestly—for I scorn disguise—that the matter, as it has occurred, strikes me as being of the most trifling and unimportant nature; and, al-

though the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have felt that some slight was conveyed at the name not having been originally mentioned to him, I am persuaded that every one who impartially views the question at issue, will feel that it is only an apparent slight. It would certainly have been a slight had it been so intended; but I solemnly declare that, on my part, no slight whatever was intended.

From the 2d of December up to the 26th of that month —though I remained constantly in town up to the 23d— the subject never was revived with me, or in my presence. If anything passed between other members of the cabinet upon this matter, to me it was wholly unknown. I considered it completely at rest. It is true, however, that before the 26th, several events which tended materially to impair the strength and to shake the stability of the Government had occurred. Some of them are notorious to all the world, and it is no part of my explanation here to describe them: others were communicated to me and my noble friend Lord Goderich, in a manner which precludes me from adverting to them, without betraying confidences, which I am not at liberty to disclose. These signs of the times were ominous; but still, when I left town for a few days on the 23d of December, I can state with perfect sincerity, that it was my fixed and firm determination to use my best efforts to keep the Government together, and to prepare myself to meet the difficulties, whatever they might be, of our situation in Parliament. Nay, on the very day on which I left London, I distinctly declared, verbally to some, and by letter to others, of my colleagues, "that whatever might be the risk of failure, and even were the blame of a bad fight to fall upon myself, I would rather go fairly and manfully to it, than appear to shrink at the approach of the struggle."

But, Sir, three days afterwards, on the 26th of December, being then at Broadlands, the seat of my noble friend Lord Palmerston, I received from Lord Goderich a copy of the letter which had been addressed to him on the 21st, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lord Goderich left me at liberty to shew it to Lord Palmerston. I did so,—but from that moment, as my noble friend will do me the justice to recollect, I plainly saw and declared, that whatever little chance there might, at one time, have existed of my being enabled to conduct the affairs of Government in the House of Commons, it was now at an end;—that those who were my colleagues there, and upon whose cordial, steady, and zealous co-operation that chance so mainly depended, were not likely to draw together;—that there was no hope of our all pulling one way, and looking to one object. From the moment that I felt convinced (and reflexion and further information only confirmed that conviction), that I could not rely upon that union of feeling and interest, I could not doubt that to go on with the administration, under the circumstances which I have stated, would be to expose the best interests of the public, and, consequently, to put my own public character and personal responsibility in jeopardy. On the 27th of December (the day after the receipt of this letter) I returned to town. On the 28th, I saw Lord Goderich, and laid my mind open to him, as I have now laid it open to the House. He told me explicitly, that the question of the Chairmanship of the Committee of Finance was, in the abstract, of trifling importance; for that, without meaning to disparage the just pretensions of Lord Althorp, other members of Parliament might be found equally competent to that situation. It was impossible, however, for me to dissemble to myself, that from the manner in which this obstacle had unfortunately arisen, it could not be easily overcome; and

that, from the moment it was required as indispensable that this particular arrangement should be abandoned, it became impossible for me to recede, without admitting such a concession, as I knew would be hailed by some as a subject of triumph,—such as would tend to lower me in the public opinion, and expose me, even in this House, to be taunted with want of firmness, and thus consequently greatly diminish the measure of my usefulness in the official sphere which I then occupied. I perfectly admit, that the abstract question was of no moment; but it became raised by accompanying circumstances into one of vital importance, and assumed a form pregnant with danger.

On the 29th, a cabinet was summoned upon a question of great importance, in reference to our foreign policy. Now, Sir, I beg the particular attention of the House to dates and circumstances.

Before the meeting of the Cabinet, I called upon my noble friend, Lord Goderich, and told him that I no longer considered myself in the King's service; that I was about to write to his Majesty, humbly to tender my resignation (in fact my letter was then already written, though not sent), and that I should, therefore, take no part in the deliberations of the Cabinet of that day; though, to prevent premature surmises and inconvenient impressions among our colleagues, I should attend the meeting. My noble friend told me, that my withdrawing from the King's service would necessarily and immediately break up the whole Administration, and he suggested to me that I ought, before the meeting of the Cabinet, to make known my intentions to my noble friend, the Foreign Secretary,* —in order that he might judge how far it would be proper to bring forward any important question, in such a state of affairs. I immediately acted upon this suggestion. After

* The Earl of Dudley.

the Cabinet I was told by my noble friend, Lord Dudley, that Lord Lansdowne was on the point of returning to Bowood for a fortnight. Considering his station in the Government, and the entire confidence existing between us, I did not think that I could let him leave town without making known to him the same statement which I had before made to Lord Dudley and Lord Goderich. With this knowledge, Lord Lansdowne left town the next morning. Here I ought to state, that both Lord Dudley and Lord Lansdowne made the same remark as Lord Goderich; namely, that my resignation would immediately break up the whole Administration. Circumstances which occurred the next day (I allude to the arrival of the Infant Don Miguel, and his visit to his Majesty) induced me to suspend for a few days the intention of sending in my letter of resignation,—and, in that interval, it was represented to me very strongly that, whilst on the one hand my retiring would, from circumstances, necessarily break up the Government, the resignation of Mr. Herries would not necessarily produce that effect:—that by persevering I, therefore, was making myself individually responsible for breaking up the Administration. I yielded to these representations, and on the 1st of January I wrote to Lord Goderich, pressing him to ascertain Mr. Herries' final decision, and that I should suspend till then any further step on my part. My noble friend used every means of entreaty and persuasion in his power to induce Mr. Herries to recall his resignation; and, finally, failing in that, he waited upon his Majesty on the 8th of January. The result I need not mention. But, under the difficulties in which my noble friend was placed (and there were several of great weight to which I am not at liberty to advert), I am bound to say, that I think my noble friend did his duty to the King and the Country in laying them honestly and fairly, as he did, before his Ma-

jesty. But it was his own act. At least, I did not know whether my noble friend would, or would not, submit any new arrangement to the King; but, in my judgment, his first duty was to conceal nothing from his Majesty. The House and the country must see that I went every length which I consistently could, even to the abandonment of the course which my own judgment had pointed out to me as the best and fittest for me to pursue, in order to prevent the Government of Lord Goderich from being broken up. I can safely affirm, that the exertions which I made for this purpose, during four months, were incessant; and that I most cordially and zealously laboured with my noble friend, sparing neither pains, nor comfort, nor health itself, to keep together the elements of which it was formed; and, what was far more difficult, the parties and interests from which it was entitled to expect support.

On the 10th of January, in the evening, Lord Lansdowne returned to town, two days, consequently, after Lord Goderich's administration was virtually at an end. I am, Sir, obliged to introduce the name of the noble marquis here, not certainly from any thing which has been said by my noble friend, but in order to clear away an insinuation which has been most unwarrantably thrown out in another place, with reference to the sincerity of my communications with Lord Lansdowne, and to destroy an imputation of something like treachery on my part towards him.

At the time of which I am speaking I had had no communication whatever with the Duke of Wellington, but I had heard that a noble and learned lord had a communication to make to Lord Lansdowne. The next morning, the 11th, I had an interview with the noble Marquis. In that interview I alluded to the nature of that communication; and certainly in that interview I understood that, should

such a communication be made, he, Lord Lansdowne, would, for reasons which he then stated to me, and which he has stated publicly, not feel himself at liberty to continue in the Ministry. At the same time, I am free to say, that I declared in reply that I did not conceive the reasons which my noble friend adduced in support of his decision—reasons principally involving circumstances connected with the affairs of Ireland and the Catholic Question—to be of such a nature, as to preclude me from exercising my own discretion, should a proposal to remain in office be made to me. Now, Sir, the insinuation against me is that, availing myself of this knowledge of the noble Marquis's intentions, I told the Duke of Wellington, and thereby prevented any proposal being made to him. This insinuation I have seen in print, and I feel bound as a public man to repel it. I solemnly declare that from that moment I felt my lips sealed in respect to Lord Lansdowne, in any communication which I might have with the Duke of Wellington,—and I can state one strong circumstance in confirmation. On Sunday, the 13th (I was then confined to my house), my noble friend Lord Carlisle called upon me, to ask whether I could give him any information on this point—that is, whether any communication was to be made to Lord Lansdowne. I then stated confidentially to my noble friend what Lord Lansdowne had told me of his sentiments on Friday, and I expressly assigned to him that information as a conclusive reason with me for remaining altogether silent upon the subject.

I now come, Sir, to the explanation which I have to give, and which, I trust, will not occupy the time of the House for many minutes, in respect to what I am supposed, or reported, to have said at Liverpool on the subject of the communications which passed between me and the Duke of Wellington, on the formation of the new Administration.

Before I advert, however, to this subject, I cannot help saying, that I did not expect the mere fact of my answering the queries of my constituents on such an occasion, quite independent of the merits or demerits of the answers themselves, would become the subject of a sneer in a British House of Parliament. With all the unfeigned respect which I feel for the great constitutional learning which distinguishes the quarter from which that sneer proceeded, I own that I still retain enough of what I must now, however, suppose is considered by some as obsolete prejudice, to think that when a member of the House of Commons accepts an office under the Crown, and vacates his seat by such acceptance, and goes back to his former constituents to ask the renewal of the confidence and trust which they had before reposed in him, that, standing before them in that situation, more than on any other occasion, he owes to them, according to the best theory and practice of the popular part of our constitution, a full account of the circumstances which have brought him before them; and that he is bound to satisfy the scrutinizing queries and doubts of those who have not only a right to ask for information, but also a duty to discharge on behalf of the people of England, in manifesting their jealousy on such an occasion. There may exist in this country some school of innovation (not the school to which I belong) in which this doctrine is exploded as antiquated and mistaken. The lights of this school have not yet beamed upon my constituents, and sure I am that with the intelligent and numerous community which it is my pride to represent, all the virtues, all the learning, and the transcendant talents of the noble individual to whom I allude, would not, under similar circumstances, have been a satisfactory guarantee to my constituents, if he had refused to give them such explanations as I was called upon to afford.

Now, Sir, having stumbled upon this unfortunate word "*guarantee*,"—a word upon which so much nonsense has been written and talked, and so much malevolence been at work, in this town, within the last week, and by which, even upon honest and fair minds, some erroneous impressions may have been made,—I readily admit that it was the word which I employed, more than once, in addressing my constituents at Liverpool.

I must say that I cannot but marvel that there should exist understandings so constituted, and feelings so perverted, at least in any class of men claiming to be gentlemen and men of honour, as to suppose that either I, or any of my noble and right honourable friends, who formed part of the last administration, negotiated with the Duke of Wellington upon the principle of a bargain to be made, and a contract to be entered into, between adverse parties having opposite and conflicting interests. Do they imagine that the Duke of Wellington, with his exalted character and high sense of honour, is a man very likely to have sent, not for one, but for five or six gentlemen, who have never shewn indifference to character or personal honour, for the worse than idle purpose of trying upon them what could only have been considered as an insult. Or do they pay the Duke of Wellington the compliment to suppose, that he is such a driveller, as not to see that, if these five or six gentlemen could, for a moment, have entertained the monstrous proposal (supposing it to have been made), they would have rendered themselves worse than useless in the construction of his administration? Speaking of the Duke of Wellington on the one part, and of myself and my honourable friends on the other, I say, that to have made such a proposal, or to have listened to it, on whichever side it had originated, would have brought equal discredit upon both. What sort of a driveller, then, must I

be, if, in addressing my constituents at Liverpool, I justly exposed myself and others to this imputation, and did so, with the certainty that, within three days, my insane statement must be known to the parties whom it affected, and contradicted by one and all of them, not only in justice to themselves, but in compassion to the author of it?

I do not retract one jot of all that I stated to my constituents at Liverpool respecting Guarantees. I cannot be answerable for the exact words which I used, and still less for the manner in which they have been reported, amidst the din and interruptions of a public hustings at a popular election; but, in meaning and substance, what I said was this: that, before I gave my consent to form a part of the present administration, I had sought for explanations, as well in respect to general principles, as to certain measures then pending, connected both with our domestic and our foreign policy. Having received explanations, and come to such an understanding as appeared to me satisfactory, I considered the remaining in office of the Foreign Secretary, of the President of the Board of Trade, of the Secretary at War, and of the Secretary for Ireland, as the best guarantee to me (the best that could be given), that such understanding was equally satisfactory to them, and that their remaining jointly with myself would be a guarantee (a voucher or pledge if you will) to our friends, to the public, and in the case of the Foreign Secretary, to our allies and to Europe.

In order to leave no doubt that this was my meaning in addressing my constituents, I put this sort of challenge to the querists, by whom I had been catechized, and to whom I was then replying.—Admitting that, for the preservation of office and its emoluments at the expense of public and personal honour, I had been base enough to remain, you must suppose that Lord Dudley, and Lord

Palmerston, that Mr. Grant and Mr. Lamb, have joined with me in this conspiracy to ruin our own characters, by a shameful dereliction of principle, and a base abandonment of measures to which we are committed; and I asked them, if they thought such a conspiracy probable, or even possible? It must, therefore, have been obvious (as I have the best proof that it was obvious) to my constituents at Liverpool, that, in using the word "Guarantee," I was not applying it in the strict technical, or legal, sense,—that I was not speaking of a written engagement, properly stamped, signed and sealed for the performance of certain articles,—but in the sense in which the word is frequently used in common parlance—in precisely the same sense in which it was used in this House, without exciting special notice or giving offence to any one, on the first day of the session by my noble friend the Secretary at War. When adverting to Ireland, he said—"My honourable friend, the member for Armagh, and those who are, with him, equally anxious as to the welfare of Ireland, must regard the continuance of my right honourable friend in his office, as a *guarantee* that the administration of the affairs of that country will be conducted on the same principles of conciliation as before, and with the same views of keeping the passions of all parties in a state of undisturbed tranquillity." Therefore, I say, Sir, that I and my noble and right honourable friends have all the guarantees, or stipulations, or pledges—call them which you will—which we ever dreamt of asking for. They consist in the explanations and understanding which we had with the noble Duke, —in the fact, that the Foreign Department of this country remains in the hands of my noble friend Lord Dudley,—of its Commercial Policy continuing in the hands of my right honourable friend Mr. Grant,—of the Chief Secretaryship and Government of Ireland remaining as it was

in the late Administration,—and of the Colonial Policy being still in my charge.

I have no intention to involve my right honourable friend the Home Secretary, in the necessity of saying one word upon any part of this painful discussion. I will say nothing myself, which I do not think necessary for the vindication of my character,—aspersed as it is by some from whom I might have expected a different treatment; but as coming within that line of demarcation, I do say in his presence (as one that can contradict me if I state any thing not correct)—that, at a very early period of my communication with the Duke of Wellington, I did state, that, if it was wished to retain me in the Government, I should look to Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Lamb, being also retained in their respective situations. I claimed no authority to communicate with them, or to convey to them any offer. On the contrary, from the moment I had made known my expectation, I avoided all communication with them, and it was for the Duke of Wellington to make them the offers, or not, as it might appear to him desirable, or otherwise, for the construction of his government. It was also for the Duke to give them such explanations as they might wish for on the occasion. It is true, when they had each been sent for in succession, and each had received such preliminary explanations as they asked for on the occasion, they came to me, and, upon some points, we afterwards had communications jointly with the Duke, for the sake of more effectually guarding ourselves from the risk of having misunderstood any thing which he had stated to us separately.

Therefore, Sir, I say again and emphatically, in the only sense in which I used the word, that Lord Dudley remaining in his office,—Mr. Grant remaining in his office,—and the other gentlemen remaining in their offices, are

guarantees, to me most satisfactory, and I trust equally so to the public. To me, and to them individually, an understanding with the noble Duke, might have been perfectly sufficient; but, when the execution of the measures to which that understanding applies, remains entrusted to the same hands as before, I think we ought to stand clear with the most sceptical and captious as to our conduct in remaining in office.

I have before stated, that the reporters, to whose general skill, diligence, and impartiality, I am most ready to bear witness, misconceived what I stated; but my constituents at Liverpool did not, as I have reason to know, labour under any such misconception. I will state the grounds upon which I make this assertion, and I request the attention of the House, as my character is, in some degree, interested upon the point; and I would likewise take the liberty of requesting the particular attention of the honourable and learned gentleman opposite. The letter which I hold in my hand, I received this morning by post. So far, I am glad that this explanation has been postponed from Friday until this evening; since it has enabled me to procure the evidence of a witness above all suspicion—no friend of mine, either personally or politically—a witness, whom I never saw in my life until I met him on the hustings at the day of election;—one who, above all persons, was most interested carefully to watch what I did say; because he had undertaken to reply to what might fall from me. I shall ever feel grateful to the writer of this letter, inasmuch as from a real sense of fair dealing, which always forms part of the character of Englishmen, however opposed in politics—from a mere sense of charity, if I may use the expression, befitting the character of a minister of religion, who saw a person suffering under unjust imputations—he came forward to give testimony in my behalf. The gentleman to whom I allude is the Reverend Mr. Shepherd. The

learned gentleman opposite knows that he is incapable of stating any thing that is not correct; and moreover, he has no motive for any thing which he states on this occasion, except to satisfy justice. If I had not received this letter, the House would have been in possession of nothing more than my own assertion of what I intended to say at Liverpool, opposed to imperfect reports; but I trust the House will do me the justice to believe, that in such a case I should have confidently relied upon my character with them, and should not have deigned to call upon any witness to support my statement. Mr. Shepherd's testimony, however, is voluntary, and comes from a quarter whence of all others I least expected it, and therefore I do not scruple to make use of it. Mr. Shepherd, I should observe, stood close beside me on the hustings, and therefore could not fail to hear distinctly all that passed. The letter is in the following terms:—

"SIR, "Gateacre, Feb. 14, 1828.

"On reading my Morning Chronicle this evening, it appears to me that the London reporters must have strangely misapprehended an important part of your last speech at the hustings, on your re-election. As I stood close to you on that occasion, and attentively marked what you said, as it was my duty to do, in the circumstances in which I was placed, I have a distinct recollection, that when you spoke of Guarantees, you said, in substance, that you found them in the composition of the projected Cabinet, and especially in the introduction into it of Lord Dudley, Mr. Grant, and one more, whom I do not at this instant call to mind. Of personal guarantees, as demanded from, and given by, the Duke of Wellington, you did not say one word. Accordingly, in my reply, the essence of what I said was a doubt whether, in the composition of the Cabinet, you would find sufficient support to your own liberal views.

"Perhaps, before you receive this, you may have run the gauntlet of the House of Commons. If my reminiscences, however, should perchance be of any service to you, it is but just that I should put them at your disposal. Ministers of state have sufficient to answer for, without being inconvenienced by the errors of the gentlemen of the press. I remain, Yours, &c. WILLIAM SHEPHERD."

There is a postscript, which I will read for the benefit of the honourable and learned gentleman—

"P.S.—I take it for granted that Mr. Brougham will have some comment to make on the late transactions. That, on this point, he may not get on wrong ground, I could wish you would communicate to him the purport of this letter."

I am quite ready to obey the reverend writer's injunction. [Mr. Brougham.—It is quite unnecessary. I accept the right honourable gentleman's personal guarantee.]

Having stated thus much on the subject of a mistaken word, I will now proceed to another and more important part of the question, the general policy of the present administration. Upon that part of my communications with the Duke of Wellington and my right honourable friend near me which relates to general principles, I own that, from the first, I did not much apprehend that we should differ. I had sat with both of them in cabinet for several years. They had concurred in all the measures which had been brought forward by me during that period. Now, what I understand, and what any man of common sense, I think, must understand by the Foreign Policy, or the Domestic Policy, of the country at any particular period of time, is the application of general principles to the special measures which are rendered necessary, in the first case, by the state of our relations with other countries; and, in the second, which are become expedient for the internal security, or external improvement, of our own country. The Expedition to Portugal, the Greek Mediation, are instances of the former,—the Silk question is an instance of the latter. I thought the general principles which regulate the commerce of the country in all other great articles of trade, ought to be applied to this branch. My noble friend now at the head of the Government,—my right honourable friend near me, were of the same opinion. I proposed this assimilation to Parliament. They supported it. The

plan was opposed by Mr. Baring, Mr. Ellice, Mr. Williams,—not because they were ultra-tories—not because they denied the principles, but because they differed from me as to the application of them, under all the then circumstances of the manufacture and of the country. Here, then, is an illustration of a difference of policy (which is the application of principle to a particular state of things) between me and the honourable gentlemen to whom I have alluded. Such a difference, in the course of events, may arise between men, the most agreed upon principles, and acting most conscientiously and honourably together. When it does arise between me and my colleagues, if we cannot reconcile our differences, it will be my duty to resign.

That, in thus speaking of principles, I have said nothing more than that to which the noble Duke himself is ready to subscribe, I have the best assurance in what has fallen from him elsewhere. The noble Duke says,—"It cannot be forgotten, that I was a member of Lord Liverpool's cabinet, and that, in being so, I was a party to the greater part of the measures upon which it was proposed to conduct the business of the present Administration; that I concurred in those measures; and that, equally with others, I share their full responsibility. How, then, could I, with the least show of consistency—the slightest regard for character—depart from the maintenance and prosecution of measures to which I already stand pledged?"

Having taken the liberty to read these words, so expressive of the noble Duke's sentiments, I would wish those, who are ever mischievously, as I think, endeavouring to identify him with their own contracted views and prejudices, to bear them in their recollection, and to mitigate somewhat of that blundering zeal, under the impulse of which, in their anxiety to asperse the character of Mr. Canning, they do not perceive that they are calling in

mode of proceeding, which could take place between gentlemen on such an occasion. But if it be considered a pledge, I will appeal to the House whether, both in the construction of the committee, and the principles of the government, in proposing it to the House, that pledge has not been most fully and honourably redeemed?

I will not dwell further on this subject; and this explanation now given, no misrepresentations that may be attempted,—possibly purposely attempted, in the hope of sowing the seeds of disunion and mistrust,—shall ever induce me again to revert to it.

Sir, there remains only one other point, of a very painful nature, upon which I wish to say a word. This question, I understand, has been directly addressed to me in another place, and where I could not possibly answer it—"Did not I declare, that I never would belong to an administration of which the Duke of Wellington and my right honourable friend near me, formed a part?" I answer emphatically and positively, that I never made such a declaration as that which this question assumes. Looking to the quarter from which the question was put, respecting the pious feelings by which it was suggested, reverencing with equal piety the memory of him, whose memory it is mistakenly, as I conceive, intended to serve, I wish to say no more. As far as private feelings of this nature are a fit subject for public notice in parliament, the question, I know, was most satisfactorily replied to in the place where it was put.

Sir, it has been my misfortune—the necessary consequence of the course which I have pursued in this House, but in which course I shall persevere,—to be exposed to much obloquy and misconception, from two opposite classes of the community—those who make it a matter of pride and duty to oppose all improvement, simply because improvement implies innovation;—and those who look to principles in the abstract, and think that they can be applied without regard

question the sincerity and good faith of the noble Duke. For example, when they state that the Expedition to Portugal was sent under false pretences, they forget that, whilst Mr. Canning was expounding the motives for that Expedition in this House, the noble Duke himself was defending the necessity and urgency of it in the other House of Parliament:—when they reprobate the treaty of the 6th of July, they are equally forgetful, that the signature of the noble Duke is attached to the Protocol of St. Petersburg on the subject of Greece; on which Protocol all that has since taken place is necessarily founded. What becomes, then, of the imputation of illiberality against the Duke of Wellington, and of the charge of inconsistency against myself and my noble and right honourable friends for taking office under him?

Now, Sir, having said so much about principles, and explanations, and understanding, I do not feel myself called upon or warranted to particularize all the points upon which I communicated with the noble Duke. It would be obviously contrary to my public duty. But if this call had been made upon me, as I expected, on Friday night, I should have been so far specific as to have stated to the House, by way of illustration only, that, upon the very important question then brought forward—the Finance Committee, I had asked a question, and received an answer. The fact is simply this. Being confined to my room by indisposition, and having accidentally omitted to advert to this topic at previous interviews which I had had with the noble Duke, I wrote (contrary to the usual mode of our intercourse) to ask him what I was to understand on this point. I hold in my hand the Duke's written answer, which was perfectly satisfactory. Let whoever pleases say, then, there were no pledges—no stipulations, no guarantees, I will not dispute about the literal meaning of words; I offer this plain fact as a fair specimen of the only

to the complicated and artificial state of society in which we exist, and without taking into account the feelings, and even the honest prejudices, of respectable classes of the community. I have endeavoured to steer a steady course between these extremes—a course, I am well aware, of which the zealots in neither of these two parties can wholly approve; but in which I hope and believe that I shall continue to receive the support of those, to whom I have been hitherto indebted for support in the councils of the country, both in Government and in this House; and if there be any who may build their hopes of driving me from that sober and temperate course, by attempting to create disunion and mistrust, I shall only find in such attemps an additional motive for cordial co-operation and increased confidence.

Every public man, I think, is bound to obey the call of his Sovereign, in respect to the public service, if there be nothing in that call inconsistent with his personal honour and declared principles. It is from this sense of duty that I am now in office. Honoured beyond my deserts, by the confidence of my King, in calling me to the situation which I now fill, and by the approbation which I have hitherto found in this House and the country, I seek no other honours; I have no ambition for any other. I have no personal gratification in view. On the other hand, admonished by increasing years and declining strength, by uncertain health, and the natural and growing desire of tranquillity, if I find that I have not the confidence of my colleagues in office, and that measures which I think necessary do not meet with their concurrence, I shall not be slow to seek retirement, and to afford to my noble friend the opportunity of placing the seals which I now hold in more efficient hands.

Mr. Duncombe having stated, in the course of the debate, that Mr. Huskisson had declared, that nothing should ever induce him to unite in office with the enemies of his late friend,

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON rose to explain. He said, he trusted that his peculiar situation would excuse his intrusion upon the House for a few moments. The declaration of the honourable member opposite, as to what he had heard of his pledge not to join the opponents of Mr. Canning—those words of his which the honourable member had converted into a pledge, and which he could only have heard by some scandalous violation of private confidence—had been so much talked of, and so grossly misrepresented, that he would state what they really were. He had never uttered any thing like the words that were imputed to him; namely, "that he would never again take office with those who had persecuted Mr. Canning to the death"—to the death, or to destruction; for it mattered little what the precise expression was which was thus sought to be put into his mouth. What he had said was this—when he returned to England in August, he had used the expression, that "his wounds were too green and too fresh, to admit of his serving in the same ministry with those who had deserted the service of their country, when the ministry of his friend, Mr. Canning, had been formed." He complained scarcely less of the violation of private confidence which would have betrayed his real words, than of their conversion into the monstrous calumny which he had now refuted; but there was a difference, and a wide one, between his speaking of his feelings while his wounds were green and fresh, and a declaration of hostility, which was to bind his conduct to eternity. The right honourable gentleman went on to justify himself against the want of confidence imputed to him by the right honourable member for Knaresborough. If there had been any design or any cabal, to him it was entirely unknown. So late as the 26th of December, he had the firmest intention of remaining in the councils of the country. Of this he could not give a stronger proof than by stating, that after that time

two persons of great eminence, politically opposed to him, had intimated plainly, that the embarrassments of the Government were so evident, that some measures ought to be taken, and that they were disposed to address the King upon the subject. To this communication he had answered, that the point was one upon which he could give no opinion; but that, whatever resolution they might take, he thought they ought decidedly to state it first to Lord Goderich. It was in consequence of this occurrence, that Lord Goderich had waited on his Majesty on the 8th of January; and at that time he had absolutely not been aware whether the noble lord went to submit his grievances to the King, or to propose some plan by which those grievances might be remedied.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL'S MOTION FOR THE REPEAL OF THE TEST AND CORPORATION ACTS.

February 26.

Lord John Russell moved, "That this House will resolve itself into a committee of the whole House, to consider of so much of the Acts of the 13th and 25th of Charles II, as requires persons, before they are admitted into any office or place in Corporations, or having accepted any office, naval or military, or any place of trust under the Crown, to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the Rites of the Church of England." After the motion had been supported by Mr. John Smith, Mr. Marshall, Mr. Wilbraham, and Mr. Fergusson, and opposed by Sir R. Inglis, and Mr. R. Palmer,

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON rose and said:—*

If I look in the abstract, at the laws which it is the object of the noble lord's motion to repeal, I certainly cannot but regret that they are to be found upon our statute book; but I equally regret that, under the present circumstances of the country, and at the present time, this motion is made for their repeal. I regret it because the motion, in my judgment, does not go to the cure of any

* From Mr. Huskisson's MS. notes.

great practical grievance, and because, whether it fail or succeed, its almost unavoidable tendency—(I hope it may not be its effect)—is to produce one.

If, then, Sir, the motion is not directed to the cure of some urgent grievance, the agitation of it at present must militate against another and a more important question, and which involves grievances of a practical and distressing nature. The honourable gentleman who spoke last but one* laid great stress upon the grievances of which the Dissenters have to complain. But if the honourable gentleman knows any thing of the laws or constitution of this country, he must know that those grievances are rather of an imaginary character. Is the career of honour closed against the Dissenter? Can he not be a sharer in the laurels of Waterloo or Trafalgar? Can he not reach the highest offices in the service of his country? There is no situation in the army or the navy which does not lie open to him; and I have yet to learn what obstacles exist against the honourable ambition of the Dissenters. They are qualified to fill the first military offices; and they have their full share of the civil power of the country. I state facts which do not admit of contradiction. Are there any of the honourable member's industrious and intelligent countrymen who entertain the least apprehension that any law can interfere between them and the prosecution of their efforts to obtain independence and station?

When I recollect that I have had the honour of a seat in this house for two and thirty years, and that amidst all the discussions of that long period, this is the first time that I have been called upon to approach this subject—that now near forty years have elapsed since it has been agitated in this House,—I think I should be warranted in concluding from this fact alone, that the grievance complained of is not one of a very pinching or pressing nature. But rea-

* Mr. R. Cutlar Fergusson.

sons have been assigned for this silence of the Dissenters for a period of nearly forty years. It is said, that on account of the foreign wars in which the country has been engaged, and of the progress of dangerous principles at home, the Dissenters conceived it better not to agitate the public mind with the discussion of their question. Does the noble lord know the history of the last forty years? Is he not aware, that during the period to which I have referred, questions involving the same principle as the one now before us—the principle of disqualification on account of religious dissent, have occupied more time, and been agitated with more excitement, than any other topic of great public interest;—that upon those questions, not only the greatest men of our time, but the two Houses of Parliament have differed—that they have led to changes in the Councils of the Sovereign—and that the parties who are now petitioning the House, men alive to their own interests, sensitive of their own wrongs—men distinguished, as many of these petitioners are, for great acuteness of intellect, for cultivated minds, for indefatigable ardour in pursuit of any great object, and for great consideration in the country, have during the same period been perfectly quiescent? I confess that, when I find men of this character, and of those high feelings, acting in this manner, I cannot admit that any great practical evil has been pressing hard upon them. If an oppressive grievance had existed—if a wrong of any kind whatever had been committed—would they have failed to remonstrate against the continuance of the system? The fact cannot have been so; for, during the long period of forty years, the parties the most interested have preserved a total silence.

On the other hand, Sir, I confidently affirm, that having been an observer of the progress of events, this quiescent state for forty years has been attended with the happiest

effects. In the habits and intercourse of society, in the relation of individuals and different communions towards each other—in short, in all the transactions of life, whatever asperity there may at one time have existed, has been gradually softened down; and it would not be doing justice to the clergy of the Established Church not to declare, that they have been among the first and most forward to cultivate this spirit of conciliation; as I am sure they would now be the last and the most unwilling to take any step which might interrupt it.

Now, Sir, the practical evil which I apprehend from this agitation of the question is, that it may tend to such interruption—that it may, in some degree, revive those sore and jealous feelings which are nearly extinct, and again retrace among the community, in a more conspicuous form, that nearly worn-out love of demarcation, which time and a mutual spirit of good-will and forbearance have nearly obliterated. It may draw attention to periods of our history, which it would be well to cast in the shade; and it may revive sectarian animosities, which the charitable and the good are anxious to see buried in oblivion.

Upon this ground alone, I wish the present motion had not been brought forward; but I own, Sir, I have other reasons for entertaining the same feeling. No man acquainted with my mode of thinking upon subjects of this nature, will suppose that I am a friend to the principle of religious tests—that I think any member of the community ought to be deprived of his eligibility to office, or (what is still more harsh) that he ought to incur the forfeiture of the honours and privileges which are his birth-right—as is the case in the Peerage, solely on account of his religious creed. But, Sir, I must look at this system as a whole—I must apply myself, not to its secondary, I was going to say, to its imaginary evils, but to its real practical hardships, as

far as concerns individuals, and whole classes of the community—as to its effects upon the prosperity and interests of the state, and to its ultimate connexion with the strength and security of the United Kingdom. I must look at it in that quarter where it taints, or, at best, neutralizes all that is good, and where it stimulates and gives increased activity to all that is bad, in the condition of society. In short, Sir, I wish to look at this question, as that greatest of men, by whose views I am, as much as possible, always anxious to be guided, looked at it. I mean Mr. Pitt. If gentlemen will turn to his Correspondence with the late King in 1801, which has recently been given to the public, they will see that it was his intention, if he had been allowed to settle what is called the Catholic Question, to have made the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts a part of a general arrangement, but that he was decidedly opposed to any modification of them, until the settlement of the Catholic question had been satisfactorily adjusted.

Having adverted to these Letters of Mr. Pitt, I cannot help expressing all the obligation which I feel to those who have made them public, not only for the public service which they have done, but for the unquestionable testimony which they have thus produced of the sincerity and zeal of Mr. Pitt, in respect to the great public question to which these letters relate. I trust that neither in Parliament, nor elsewhere, shall we ever again have it intimated, that his desire to repeal the penal laws affecting the Catholics was a mere evanescent scintilla that came across his great mind, without leaving any hold upon it, without assuming any shape, or inducing him to meditate any plan, for the purpose of giving effect to his principles.

Sir, I cannot help thinking that I am advancing these principles, by taking his view of the particular measure now under consideration. Looking to probable conse-

quences only—to the great distinction of Catholic and Protestant—I cannot think that I shall advance the cause of the former by changing the principle of our policy—I say nothing of the practice—on these matters, only to this extent—that whereas conformity is now the rule applicable to all Dissenters, whether Catholic or Protestant, the effect of the present measure, if successful, will be (I do not say the object) to make the Catholic and the Catholic alone, in law as well as in practice, the exception. I wish to avoid discussing the question; but I cannot help asking gentlemen, who like myself are anxious for the success of the Catholic question, whether they do not think that this will be setting up, and giving increased strength to, the objection now urged against the Catholics, in respect to their spiritual dependance on the See of Rome—whether this objection will not be urged by many of the Protestant Dissenters themselves, and with increased effect, when they themselves are relieved from the general principle which now exists; and I own, Sir, that in matters of toleration, I am not disposed to extend to any one particular sect more than it is intended to grant to others. I am not abstractedly unfriendly to the proposition of the noble lord; but I cannot assent to it, because I am sure that, with reference to the great question of the Catholic claims, it will make a bad impression. I am convinced that the present measure, so far from being a step in favour of the Catholic claims, will, if successful, be the means of arraying an additional power against them. Upon that point I would appeal to the noble lord opposite.—[Lord Nugent, across the table, expressed his dissent from the proposition.] Will the noble lord take upon himself to say, that the feeling in favour of the Roman Catholics is general—is universal—through all the Dissenters of this country? I am convinced, I repeat, that the present step, so far from being a step in favour of the Catholic claims, will be the means of arraying an addi-

tional power against them. I know something of the feelings of the Dissenters, as well as the noble lord who presented the petition of the Roman Catholic nobility and gentry in their favour; and I can tell that noble lord, that there would be something revolting to my feelings to say to the first duke of the realm, "Your hereditary honours and privileges must continue under forfeiture, but I cannot bear the thoughts of an exciseman being exposed to the humiliation of being indemnified against contingent penalties, for insuring himself against the risk of which he would not, I am convinced, give the value of one single day's pay." I will tell the noble lord who has introduced the subject, that if the question were carried and finally settled, he would find in the great body of Dissenters (not, indeed, amongst the liberal and enlightened part of that body) a strong feeling of opposition to the claims of the Catholics. Will the noble lord deny, that there are in this country a great many persons—perhaps a majority—who most sincerely, and conscientiously, and honourably entertain the greatest apprehensions, lest the Roman Catholics should be allowed a further participation in the privileges of the constitution, unless under certain engagements? I am ready to contend, that there is not one of those persons who is not convinced, that whenever concession is made, it ought to be accompanied with some strong tests—with some effectual securities. And, if this be the case, I ask the noble lord, whether he does not think that this class of sincere Protestants, who, if the oaths against supremacy and transubstantiation were removed, are anxious that some other securities should be given—would not feel it desirable to ask, with reference to the Roman Catholics, that on their part some guards, some securities should be given, if fresh privileges were extended to them? Not only might the Protestant Dissenters but the Church of England-men ex-

claim, in the event of a concession of the Catholic claims—"We will have this check—we will have an annual Bill of Indemnity!" I do not mean to say that they could have this for ever, but I will assert, that if such a proposition were moved previously to the introduction of the Catholic question, it would raise new obstacles to the accomplishment of that measure.

There is another point of view, in which I would wish this motion to be considered by the friends of the Catholics. The Test Act was framed originally for the purpose of their exclusion; every gentleman knows the strong and honest, and sincere apprehensions which are still entertained in this country against their admission to power; every body admits that some civil tests and securities are necessary. Now, let me ask of gentlemen to consider whether, with many, who have a friendly inclination to the Catholics, something like this mode of reasoning may not have its weight?

Should the Catholics be admitted to power, by a modification of the oaths against transubstantiation and supremacy, which particularly affect them, in the absence of other securities which might be satisfactory, this of the Test Act would still remain. It would remain a possible check upon them, subject to annual indemnity, so long as they did nothing to provoke its application; but with the possibility of withholding that indemnity, should there exist sufficient cause to do so.

I say this is not an impossible view of the subject to be taken by many an honest and timorous Protestant, who might be inclined to afford relief to the Catholics; and I would not have the Catholics make too sure that, if the Test Act were repealed, many a Dissenter would not find in the loss of that check an additional motive against yielding to his Catholic brethren the same measure of emancipation which he now seeks for himself.

Entertaining this view of the question, I for one, Sir, am not prepared to support the noble lord's motion. I thank the noble lord for the moderate, yet able manner, in which he has brought forward his case. I am quite sure, if the discussion leads to dissension out of doors, or to any exasperation of those feelings which are generally mixed up with questions of this kind, that such an effect cannot be traced to the way in which the subject has been introduced. Such disssension and evil feelings can only arise from the nature of the case itself, and cannot be attributed to the tone or temper in which the noble lord has approached the subject. Nothing, I am bound to say, can be more mild, more prudent, or more discreet, than the way in which the noble lord has brought the question before the House. Such, Sir, are my feelings upon the subject; and being strongly impressed with the truth and justice of the important principle contained in the Correspondence of Mr. Pitt with his late Majesty, to which I have referred, I have deemed it to be my duty to take the position which I have done upon this occasion.

The House divided: For the motion, 237. Against it

EMIGRATION—PASSENGERS REGULATION BILL.

March 4.

Mr. Wilmot Horton moved for a copy of the Report laid before the Cabinet Department by Lieutenant Colonel Cockburn, on the subject of Emigration; together with the Instructions received from that Department in January 1827; and also for leave to bring in a Bill to regulate the conveyance of Passengers in Merchant Vessels from the United Kingdom to foreign parts. Sir James Graham having asked, whether it really was the intention of Government to revive the Passengers' Act, after the report of the last session?

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON said, he felt in common with his right honourable friend, that no matter required earlier attention than the revival of certain provisions of the Pas

sengers Act. If the honourable baronet had seen all the reports from New Brunswick and the other colonies, to which there had been a considerable emigration last year, he would be satisfied of the propriety of such a course. Those who arrived had carried with them contagious disorders of the worst description. In some instances, the gaol fever devastated whole townships, to the destruction of not less than one-tenth of the population. The interests of humanity loudly demanded that immediate measures should be taken to secure for the passengers in those vessels a sufficient space, and a due attention to their comforts and accommodation. There were many provisions in the old act of an objectionable nature; but no time should be lost in reviving the material provisions of that act, as the season was fast approaching when vessels with passengers would be clearing for the Colonies and North America. He would not enter then upon the discussion of the subject immediately before the House, nor examine whether there existed an excess of population beyond that for which employment could be found. But, while that was an evil in itself, there were other evils and other considerations which should be attended to. One of the greatest of these—an evil not impossible in any country, and not improbable in this—was, that there might exist a great emigration from amongst the population, without a corresponding emigration of capital; and thus they would be only transferring a portion of the existing mischief to other quarters of the world. If individuals were encouraged to emigrate, they should be enabled to employ themselves profitably, in the new countries to which they were sent, and the capital at present lying idle in this country might be advantageously put in requisition for that purpose.

Mr. Hume said, that the Emigration Committee had recommended the repeal of the Act which it was now proposed to revive, on the ground that it had prevented the emigration of thousands to America.

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON confessed that he was unable to understand the nature of those pure abstract principles, which were to prevent them from interfering where the interests of humanity were at stake. He could not conceive the meaning of those general principles, which should never bend to circumstances. The honourable gentleman seemed to doubt whether Government had received any documents upon which they could found the proposed measure. Now, during the short time that he had been in his present office, a variety of documents had reached him upon the matter, and amongst others a letter from that gallant officer, Sir James Kempt, who was commander on the Halifax station. He wrote, that during the last season the ship 'James' arrived there from Ireland, with emigrants. She sailed with a hundred and sixty on board, of whom five died on the passage, and thirty-five were left at Newfoundland, being unable to proceed. The remaining hundred and twenty, with the crew, arrived at Halifax, all labouring under typhus fever. At that time, the population of Halifax amounted to seven thousand, and in the lapse of ten months eight hundred had fallen victims to the contagion. Last year nearly two-thirds of the emigrants from Ireland had been carried off by fever. Care ought to be taken to prevent the crowding of these poor people into a smaller space than was compatible with health and comfort. All he asked for, however, was,—and he stated this to allay the fears of those who were adverse to an alteration in the present system,—not that unnecessary regulations should be introduced, which must, necessarily, have the effect of throwing obstacles in the way of the improvement of the colonies, but that care should be taken to provide sufficient quarters and sufficient diet, so as to prevent the introduction of those dangerous fevers, which were often fatal to the parties themselves, to those employed in navigating the

ships carrying the emigrants, and to the people amongst whom the emigrants went to reside. All this might be avoided, by adopting necessary precautions; and he might be permitted to observe, that regulations were enforced in various of the British colonies, much more strict than any that this law would impose. With respect to the way in which these poor people were sent out of Ireland, it was, in many instances, most lamentable. The law had no power to interfere, and the consequences were horrible. In one instance, the passengers, in a state of despair, had taken possession of the vessel, and a melancholy shipwreck was the consequence. He therefore thought it absolutely necessary to introduce some measure to rectify so great an evil.

Leave was given to bring in the bill.

March 18.

On the order of the day for the second reading of the Bill, it was supported by Mr. Villiers Stuart, and opposed by Mr. Warburton and Mr. James Grattan, on the ground that it was calculated to impede emigration rather than promote it, and that a previous committee on the bill was necessary.

Mr. Secretary Huskisson said, he wished to call the attention of the House to the real question before it. He was not disposed to enter into a discussion upon the general question of emigration. That was a subject which would require a more extended line of argument than honourable members would be inclined to listen to, at that late period of the evening. He could not agree that the question of emigration was one so extremely simple, that the House would be justified in saying—" if it be right to encourage emigration, then it is unnecessary to take any care of the manner in which the parties emigrating are transported to the country of their destination." The honourable member for Bridport had spoken of those parties as if they had no claim whatever

upon the consideration of the country in which they had been born, and in which they had devoted many years of their lives to labour, until peculiar circumstances of change in the condition of that country, rendered their further services superfluous, or inapplicable. Under such circumstances, he could not consent to speak of these people—the most helpless and uninformed of the community—as of a mere commodity, which was the subject of export from one locality to another.

It had surprised him to hear the honourable member for Bridport lay down those doctrines of political philosophy and medical science which he had brought forward, and especially to hear him argue upon them as upon principles to which no person could object. The honourable member's argument amounted to this—that where typhus had broken out on board the emigration ships, that malady had not arisen out of any crowded or unclean state of the vessel, but must necessarily have proceeded from the emigrants themselves having been put on board in a state of disease. This might be a discovery made by the honourable member, but certainly it was directly contrary to the opinions of all those who had paid the most attention to such subjects. But, how did the facts appear from the reports upon the table? The letters from New Brunswick distinctly attributed the disease in the ships which had reached that port to the crowded state of the vessels themselves, and to the entire want of order and cleanliness which pervaded their arrangements. The authority of this correspondence could not be questioned; but the honourable member had garbled it a little, in order to make it serve his own peculiar theory. Where the letters spoke of a particular parcel of emigrants, as the most miserable and squalid on their arrival that the writer had ever beheld, the honourable member at once jumped to the inference, that the people

must necessarily have been in that state when they embarked from Europe. Now, it was at least as likely, and certainly better proved, that they had fallen into this condition in the course of the passage. It was needless to go into detail upon the state of particular ships, when the writer in this correspondence, a captain in the navy, who had been employed in the preventive slave service on the coast of Africa, declared that the condition of many vessels which he had seen arrive at Newfoundland with emigrants, beggared all the descriptions of the state of the captured slave ships, even under the accumulated miseries belonging to the existing system of contraband trade.

This then being the case, it was the duty of ministers, and their imperative duty, to call upon Parliament for power to put a stop to these enormities; and with his best exertions, even in the teeth of science and philosophy, he would oppose the proposition for going into a committee, which would allow the opportunity of their perpetration during another season. He protested, that if the proposed committee were carried, he would himself recommend all the colonies to pass bills, in their own defence, to prevent this system of general disembarkation; for we had no fair right to inundate them with such a population as they were receiving under the existing system.

Honourable gentlemen spoke of the Passengers Act as being calculated to check the flow of voluntary emigration; but he was certain that nothing could be more likely to prevent it than the accounts which parties now received of the miserable fate of those who had gone before them. He agreed entirely with the honourable member for Waterford, that it was at least the duty of Government towards emigrants to see that they were not shipped, in any case, without a competent supply of food and water. The food might be of

the very commonest description, but a sufficient quantity of it he would have. He would insist that the water should be of a drinkable quality, shipped in a condition fit for the use of human creatures; and not in old casks which had recently contained molasses or salt hides, which he was ashamed to state to the House had been the case in more than one instance. It was too much to talk of there being no necessity for these regulations. Even in the time of the Slave-trade there had been a law regulating the number of slaves, by the tonnage, upon the middle passage; and that which we had thought it right to do for the negroes of Africa ought we to refuse to do for our own countrymen? Honourable gentlemen talked of its being hard that ships should be put to the trouble of furnishing an account of every passenger that they carried out. Why, they were compelled to furnish an account of the smallest parcel that they took out; and that which they did for a bale of goods, they might surely make shift to do for a living man. He wished to throw as little difficulty in the way of the shipping trade as possible; but he would insist upon having such a quantity of provision and water always on board, as should guarantee the emigrants from famine, in case of a protracted passage; and the state of the vessels, as to numbers, should be such as was reasonably conducive to the health and common safety of the human beings who were on board of them. With these views he resisted the appointment of a Committee up stairs, and should press his own measure, as rapidly as the forms of the House would allow him to do.

SLAVERY IN THE WEST-INDIES.

March 5.

On the presentation of a petition from the Surrey Anti-Slavery Society, Mr. Brougham said, he was anxious to learn from the right

honourable Secretary for the Colonies, what had been done to procure 'from the Colonial Legislators an acquiescence in the views of Government with respect to the Slave population; or whether the proceedings of those legislatures appeared to Government to be so satisfactory, as to preclude the necessity of any further measures in this country? Mr. Baring was of opinion, that this country, from having taken upon itself the duties of the police of the world, for the purpose of suppressing the Slave Trade, had entailed upon the public an immense expenditure of life and money.

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON said, he could only answer the question of his honourable and learned friend by, in the first place, referring him to the ample information which was laid on the table of the House in the course of the last session, which specified in detail the various measures recommended by Government to the different local legislatures, and stated what returns had been received from the colonies, as to the compliance with, or rejection of, that recommendation. A similar report would be laid before the House in the course of the present session, setting forth the further returns received from the colonies, of the measures adopted in pursuance of the urgent and repeated recommendations of the Crown of an alteration in the laws affecting the state of the slave population in the colonies.

If the present were considered a proper opportunity, he would state in which of the colonies there had been a marked improvement since last session. His honourable and learned friend shook his head, and therefore he would withhold what he had to say on that point until the papers to which he had alluded were on the table. There could not, he apprehended, be a doubt that the Resolution which was unanimously adopted by that House in May 1823, and affirmed with equal unanimity by the other House of Parliament, and by both Houses carried to the foot of the Throne, did contemplate the ultimate raising of the slaves in the British colonies to the possession of those civil rights

which were enjoyed by all other classes of his Majesty's subjects; and that that Resolution did also contemplate, that this translation from a state of slavery to a state of freedom and the possession of civil rights, should be so managed and directed, if possible, as not to interfere with the rights of private persons. It was perfectly true, as had been remarked by an honourable and learned gentleman opposite, that ministers had very little choice or discretion as to the course to be pursued in regard to this question. The language of Parliament was clear and explicit on the subject, and the intentions of Parliament had hitherto been faithfully carried into effect by the Government. Instructions had been sent out to the different governors of the colonies, directing them to use every proper exertion to cause the adoption of the measures recommended by Government. In some of the colonies which had not local legislatures, the instructions of Government had been completely carried into effect, and, as far as the time which had elapsed would permit an opinion to be formed, without, it would appear, any practical injury having resulted therefrom. In colonies which possessed local legislatures, the recommendation of Government had received more or less opposition; but in the most important of them, there had been manifested a sincere desire to accede to the wishes of Government, as far as in their apprehension,—or if his honourable and learned friend would have it so, as far as with their prejudices and fears—they felt themselves at liberty to do so.

It was a very difficult thing for a person filling the office which he held, to decide whether the ameliorations proposed in the local legislatures were such as he should be justified in recommending the other advisers of the Crown to be dissatisfied with. In some cases, the approbation of the Crown had been given to the measures of the local

legislatures; and in others, instructions had been sent out stating what further improvements were considered necessary. It was not surprising, considering the feelings which were excited in the minds of the colonists, by,—he must say it,—the manner in which they were sometimes misrepresented in this country, that there should prevail amongst them a degree of hesitation or reluctance to adopt some of the improvements suggested by Government. It should be recollected, too, that we must execute our purposes in the colonies by the agency of free persons, the owners of slaves; and if there should be no accordance of feeling between the Government of this country and the local legislatures, any attempt to carry the projected improvements into effect would only throw the colonies into irretrievable ruin, without in the least degree benefitting the slave population.

In would be the unremitting labour of the department in which he was placed to inculcate to the colonies the necessity of practically and safely, but steadily, advancing towards the accomplishment of the pledge made by Parliament; but he would always keep in view the interests of private property and the safety of those persons who, unfortunately, had a property invested in human beings. His honourable friend opposite had made an allusion to our maintaining, at an enormous expense of British life and British money, the police of the world for the prevention of the slave-trade. That a great waste of both had taken place in the efforts to put down the slave-trade, as carried on by other countries, was a proposition which would not be disputed; and he was sorry to say, that the success attendant upon those measures was by no means commensurate to their cost. That species of smuggling trade offered a temptation so irresistible, presented a profit so enormous, resembled so strongly a trade without duty and without

insurance, that nothing less than gigantic efforts could suppress it. He doubted whether any naval power that we could conveniently bring into operation against it, would ever prove sufficient to suppress this traffic in human misery, stimulated as it ever was by unbounded cupidity. He assured the House, that every information upon the subject would be most cheerfully laid upon the table of the House, and that it was in full accordance with the duty as well as with the inclination of Government, to carry into complete effect the resolutions of Parliament.

March 6.

Mr. Wilmot Horton moved, that a copy of the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Privy Council, in the matter of the Berbice and Demerara Manumission Order, be laid before the House. Mr. William Smith and Lord Nugent denied that the ownership of slaves could be assimilated to the laws applicable to any other species of property. They were followed by Mr. Baring, who asserted that the condition of the slave population was superior to that of many of the labouring classes in this country.

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON said, that amidst the difficulties with which Government had to contend, in carrying into effect the measures with reference to the West-India colonies, none were more serious than those founded upon the doctrine of the abstract rights of man, advanced by the noble lord, and by the honourable member for Norwich. But this difficulty, great as it was, was much aggravated by the opposite extremes indulged in by the honourable member for Callington, who endeavoured to impress upon the House, that slavery was in itself unavoidable, and that the condition of the negroes was preferable to that of the average of free labourers in this country. He was not surprised to hear such an extravagant principle advanced on one side, when he heard it advanced on the other side, that there could be no such thing as a legal right of property—no

such thing as an ownership, in slaves. He did not know what this last assertion meant; for it appeared to him, that the ownership in slaves was similar to other rights established by law. He acknowledged that it was an ownership entirely distinct from any other species or description of property; but let it not be supposed that the right, whatever it was, could be violated without a compensation to the owner. He did hope that, when the House came to the discussion of this great question, they would agree to avoid any discussion of abstract rights of property and abstract rights of man, and attend only to the legal rights of private ownership. Whilst the House did this, he should also wish them to bear equally in mind the resolutions of parliament, which directed the course of Government to the gradual change from slavery to a state which was to raise the negro to the same condition as the other subjects of the Crown. The present was an occasion on which it would be altogether undesireable to enter into the merits of the case. When it was stated to him, that compulsory emancipation grew out of the situation of the government of Trinidad, with respect to the Spanish law, and that no difficulty arose in applying the principle to any other of the Spanish Islands, he dissented from the doctrine. By the old Spanish law, facilities were offered of supplying, by untutored savages from Africa, the places of what he might call the educated and apprenticed negroes, who were to be liberated.

He fully agreed with what had been stated respecting the immensely improved state of the negroes in our old settled islands, subsequent to the abolition of the slave trade. The present negroes, in consequence of the abolition of that trade, were a race of beings very considerably raised in the scale of moral intelligence, and greatly improved in every thing that constituted moral worth and general utility. They had

as rapidly improved within the last twenty years, as any people had improved in an equal space of time within the cognizance of history. Within these very few days he had had the opportunity of communicating with a most able, intelligent, and disinterested witness—he meant the Bishop of Jamaica—and he could assure the House, that the report which that right reverend individual had furnished, was highly satisfactory, as to the progress of moralization among the slave population since the abolition of the trade, and since the efforts made by Government to ameliorate the condition of the negroes. But it would be greatly to be lamented, for the sake of the slaves themselves, and of humanity in general, if the House were so to interfere with the progress of the measures of Government, as to disturb that settled state of things, which was gradually leading to such great improvements. The honourable member for Callington had said, that the negroes of Antigua were as well informed, with respect to their religious duties, as the labouring classes of St. Giles's, or of any of the central districts of the metropolis, or as the labouring classes of this country in general. But if this were the case, he would ask, whether these facts did not give him a right to call on the legislature of that colony to give these well-instructed, religious, and moral persons, the full enjoyment of their civil rights—the right to be heard, and to have their evidence received, in courts of justice? The negro ought, surely, to be able to claim this right, when his property, or the welfare of his fellow-creature, was at stake.

The first step towards the improvement of the slave population was the abolition of fresh importations from Africa. From that time their progress in improvement had been rapid, and if not interrupted by internal disturbances, it would lead to that degree of civilization, which would induce Parliament to think that they had

done much better in the course they pursued, than if they had taken a step which would require large compensation to the colonists, and would, at the same time, be highly prejudicial to their interests, as well as to those of the slaves themselves. With respect to the question of contingent compensation, it could only arise when the principle of compulsory manumission had been carried to such an extent, that the colonial plantations could not be worked; and in that case something beyond the mere value of the slave should be considered, as far as the master was concerned. But it appeared that some difficulties had arisen in appraisement, from the fact that the appraisers in Trinidad looked to other circumstances beyond the actual value of the slave, and on that account the order had been suspended; and therefore some measure, he admitted, was necessary to obviate that difficulty. In that measure they should look to the principle of the resolutions of the House in 1823. In those resolutions two great points were considered. The first was, the amelioration of slavery, the parties still remaining slaves; the second was, to render their condition better, so as to have a gradual transition from slavery to freedom; but for that purpose, no step had been suggested but that of compulsory manumission. This question of compulsory manumission was not, however, to be considered at the present moment. These were matters for serious consideration, but Parliament would not depart from the great object which it had in view. It was bound to attempt, first, the amelioration of the slaves, and its attempts should be directed in such a course as would ultimately,—not rapidly, and he was afraid not within any time that could be specified, but ultimately and securely,—lead to a change in their civil condition. He did not mean to say, that it might not be well to consider what modifications of the existing regulations it might be

proper to adopt; but here it was the duty of ministers to wait until Parliament should take a different view of the subject from that which they had already recorded. He thought it necessary to say thus much, in order to guard against a supposition that Government were disposed to recede from the instructions already given. On the contrary, they would steadily bear in mind the principles laid down by Parliament, and the views in which those principles originated.

EAST RETFORD DISFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

March 21.

The order of the day was read, for taking into further consideration the report from the committee of the whole House, on the Bill "to exclude the Borough of East Retford from electing Burgesses to serve in Parliament, and to enable the Town of Birmingham to return Two Representatives to Parliament in lieu thereof." Mr. Tennyson having moved, that the Speaker do now leave the chair, Mr. Nicholson Calvert moved, "That it be an instruction to the Committee, that they have power to make provision for the prevention of Bribery and Corruption in the election of Members to serve in Parliament for the Borough of East Retford, by extending the right of voting to all Forty-shilling Freeholders of the Hundred of Bassetlaw."

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON said, he was perfectly ready to agree with those who thought that they ought not to anticipate what might be the decision of the other House of Parliament. The House had now passed beyond the stage of judicial inquiry, and had only to consider the course which, under present circumstances, it was expedient to adopt. If the House of Lords, upon inquiry, arrived at the same conclusion with respect to the delinquency of the borough in question, then the only question which

would remain for them to decide would be the question of policy. If, on the present occasion, the House had only to treat the question as in the case of one delinquent, it would be fair to treat it, perhaps, on the principle which had been adopted in the instance of the borough of Grampound. He certainly should, in that case, recommend the measure of transferring the franchise to some great commercial town. It was not with one, but with two, that at present they had to deal; and they had to deal with both at the same time. If he rightly understood the principle upon which they should act, it would be this—not only to consult the feelings of the other branch of the legislature, but also the feelings of the House of Commons; and, what was of infinitely more importance, the feelings of the various classes into which the nation was divided, and out of which grew the balanced and varied representation that formed the distinguishing characteristic of the constitution of this country. His right honourable and learned friend opposite* had declared himself favourable to the transfer of the franchise, of which it was proposed to deprive East Retford, to some great commercial community, which had never before enjoyed that privilege, rather than to some place which, in previous times, had been partially represented; and had cited instances derived from our history, near the commencement of the great civil wars, and during the reigns of the Stuarts. That, however, was a period of our history from which few good precedents could be derived. He would rather refer him to a more recent precedent; that of Grampound, where, upon the conviction of gross corruption on the part of a borough, they had determined to give the franchise to the county of York; which, considering its great wealth, and the extent of its population,

* Sir James Mackintosh.

was thought the fittest body, then without it, to which the right could be transferred.

He could not agree that the deprivation contemplated in the present measure was not to be regarded in the light of a punishment. His right honourable friend, by whom that had been asserted, here opposed himself to no mean authority; namely, that of the late Mr. Fox. For more than once it had been declared by that eminent individual, that to deprive parties so circumstanced of such a trust—to take away from them so valuable a privilege—would be doing that which, in no point of view, could otherwise be regarded than as a great punishment. Now, whether it was considered in the light of a punishment or otherwise, one thing at least was certain—that out of the two cases then before Parliament, they ought not to neglect the opportunity afforded them—they should neglect no means likely to attain an end that might be presumed to be beneficial and satisfactory to the people. It was his opinion, that before they transferred the privilege, heretofore possessed by a corrupt borough, to a great commercial community, they should consider how far that act was in conformity with the great principle from which they should not depart; namely, that of making the transfers alternate between the trading and the landed interests—proceeding always, of course, according to the circumstances of each individual case that came before them. He could not agree with his right honourable friend, that all the turbulence and riot which sometimes occurred in this country was confined to places destitute of representation. Nottingham afforded a striking instance to the contrary. It was from that town, as a centre, that Luddism spread itself through the country, extended itself to Manchester, and was productive of perhaps more injury than any other similar principle of discord and violence. Glasgow again was also represented. [No,

no.] Honourable gentlemen might say "No, no," but he contended, that Glasgow had a representative in that House. —[A MEMBER.—The fourth part of a representative.] It might be said of any town or county, that it had but the fraction of a member. He would, nevertheless, repeat his assertion, namely, that Glasgow had a representative in that House. If they departed from the principle to which he had before adverted, they would be establishing a precedent, which might carry them lengths far beyond what they first contemplated, and far beyond what they might receive external support in carrying into effect; whereas, if they adhered to it, they might improve the representation of the country, without incurring the hazard of admitting an unwise and dangerous principle of reform.

It had sometimes been said—he knew not on what grounds—that he was not a friend to the agricultural interest; but he felt the less uneasy under an imputation of that nature, as he was persuaded, that an enlarged view of the policy which he had always recommended, could not fail to lead to the conclusion, that he had uniformly supported those principles which were best calculated to promote the general interests of each class, and, as a consequence, the good of the whole community. His object, on the present occasion, would certainly be, to confer increased franchises upon the landed interest; but if the two cases were taken into account, as it manifestly was intended they should be, then there would be an equality of advantages—a great commercial community receiving benefit in the one case, and a body of the landed proprietors in the other. Upon these grounds he should feel it his duty to support the amendment.

The House divided: For Mr. Calvert's Amendment, 157. Against it, 121.

CANADA COMPANY—EMIGRATION.

March 28.

Mr. Alderman Waithman, with a view that the House should be in possession of all the knowledge it could acquire, before it came to any decision on the subject of Emigration, moved for "an Account of the quantity of Land in Upper Canada sold to the Canada Company, specifying the terms and conditions of such sale, the sums paid in conformity thereto, and also the number of persons that have been sent to Canada by the said Company." The conduct of the Company was spoken of in high terms by Mr. Wilmot Horton and Mr. Stanley; and Mr. Hume said, he should like to see similar bargains made with a dozen other Companies, in the same terms and with the same objects.

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON said, that the honourable member for Aberdeen had taken a correct view of the utility of these companies to the country. In other parts of the world, there were immense tracts of wild land which were totally unproductive; and if, by any company, they could be brought under cultivation, so as to make a return to the parties employed upon them, the result would not only be beneficial to the colony, but to the general interests of this country. He was glad that he could state, that companies on the same principle had been formed in New South Wales and at Van Diemen's Land. He trusted they would be all successful; for, to the extent in which they reclaimed lands from the state of nature, they contributed essentially to the increase of the power and resources of this country. By the contract with the Colonial Department the Canada Company had given for what it had purchased the full rate at which land was selling in the market. The company was paying down ready money, while it had to look to a remote period for the return of the capital so embarked. The honourable member for Bristol had talked as if this company had been turned

loose in Canada, to select for itself any spot it might fancy. But what was the fact? The company had first contracted for two millions of acres, consisting of clergy and crown reserves. Some difficulty arose as to the clergy reserves which could not be overcome, and the result was that they did not form part of the contract, and the company received in lieu of them a million of acres, situated on the banks of Lake Huron, lying in one lot together. The company obtained no title to those lands, but as they were progressively settled and the purchase-money paid. As the company in succession received the titles, the public would receive an annual sum, in aid of the burthen which the colonies brought on this country, in the maintenance of their civil establishments. Government had not been so improvident as to leave out of their view public improvements in these colonies. It had stipulated, that one third of the money from the company should be expended in building bridges, making roads, and other purposes of convenience and benefit. A more judicious appropriation of the land could not have been devised. The company had no desire to conceal its proceedings; being convinced, that the best way in which its prosperity could be promoted was by making known all its transactions, and inviting, rather than shunning, investigation. He knew nothing as to the profits of the company; but he believed the directors did not regard its affairs as likely to excite either jealousy or envy. He hoped, that the honourable alderman would not press his motion, but be contented with applying to the directors; any one of whom could give him the information he required. He agreed that this was a question which claimed the attention of Government, involving, as it did, so many interests connected with the permanent welfare and general prosperity of that important part of the king's dominions, and particularly as it concerned the constitu-

tional rights of the inhabitants, under the act of 1791. After the recess, it was his intention to call the attention of the House to the whole of this great subject.

The motion was withdrawn.

CORN IMPORTATION BILL.

March 31.

The House having resolved itself into a Committee on the Corn Trade Acts, Mr. Charles Grant, the President of the Board of Trade, moved, "That it is the opinion of this Committee, that every sort of corn, grain, meal or flour, which is now, by law, admissible for home use at certain times, shall be admissible for home use at all times, upon payment of the following duties respectively." Here followed the scale of duties, by which it was proposed, That wheat should be subject to a duty of 32*s.* 8*d.* per quarter, whenever the price was 52*s.*, and under 53*s.*, and that that duty should be decreased by one shilling for every increase of one shilling in the price, until it reached 73*s.*

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON rose. He began by observing, that although he by no means agreed, that it was desirable to abstain from all immediate discussion on the present occasion, and although he thought it an extraordinary anomaly, when a measure was brought forward by a minister of the Crown, that it should be unaccompanied by a full explanation of its merits and character; yet, as the propriety of such a course had been maintained, he would not enter into any wide field of remark, but would address himself merely to the few observations which had fallen from certain honourable members who had prefaced their speeches by declaring, that they would make no observations at all.

And first, he must state, that the honourable member for Lincoln was under a strange delusion in supposing that in

the last year a million and a half of quarters of foreign oats had been smuggled into Ireland, and thence imported into this country. He could assure that honourable member, after the most rigid examination, that not a single bushel of oats had been so imported in the last, or in the present year. In fact, when the cumbrous nature of the commodity was considered, and the heavy penalties which would follow detection, it was impossible to conceive the existence of such a case of smuggling as the honourable member supposed. The honourable and gallant member for Lincoln was not, however, the only person who was alarmed upon the subject of inferior grain. The honourable member for Somersetshire had expressed the same species of jealousy, and had spoken as though an immense injury had been offered to the agricultural interest, by the opening of the ports, in 1826, for the admission of foreign oats. Now, he was certainly surprised at this complaint, for, in the first place, he thought it had been agreed on all hands, that that measure of opening the ports, recommended to his Majesty in August and approved by Parliament in the following November, had been a measure not only sanctioned, but peremptorily called for, by the circumstances of the time. But an additional fact moreover existed, not merely to prove the necessity of the course adopted, but also that it was a course by which the agricultural interest had not lost a shilling; for although three million of quarters of oats had been imported, yet such was the pressing demand in the country, that the price had still continued constantly above the limitation of the bill of 1815. So that, if the ports had not been opened by that recommendation, under the existing law the oats would still have come in; and come in, as the provisions of that law stood, without paying any duty at all. Therefore it would seem, that to meet the views of the honourable member for

Somersetshire, the bill of 1815 must not only be maintained in full strength, but absolutely reinforced to such a degree as not to let in corn at all, even in the most pressing emergency of the state.

The honourable member for Somersetshire, however, who certainly was in error in supposing that the agricultural interest had lost any thing by the opening of the ports in 1826, went on to make a still more extraordinary statement, —namely, that wheat had been imported into this country in November last, at so high a duty as 40*s.* 8*d.* a quarter. This was a mistake, and it arose from the honourable baronet's having looked negligently at the return which he quoted. There was no wheat at all imported in the month to which the honourable member referred. It was true that, if wheat had been imported in that month, from the price which it bore in the same market, the duty payable would have been that which the honourable member stated; but no wheat at all had come; the return before the honourable member applied to wheat, "or other foreign grain;" and it must have been some other grain—beans, Indian corn, or flour,—that had been imported in that month. That wheat should have come in was utterly impossible. In fact, the returns of the period were before him; and during the whole time he found that wheat had kept the price here in the market of 51*s.* to 52*s.*, for three successive weeks—the note upon the importation paper was constantly "Nil," "nil," "nil."

In the same way, when the honourable member for Somersetshire said again, that corn in July last had been at 61*s.* a quarter, and in the last month it was at 52*s.*, and therefore that that decline must have proceeded from the importation of the 500,000 quarters of wheat since last September, the honourable baronet was right as to his facts, but totally wrong in his deduction. He had forgotten the

influences of times and seasons in England. He had forgotten that our system of monopoly, or something at least which approached to it, gave the mere time of year always a certain effect upon the relative price of corn. July, which was the date of the honourable member's high price, was the end of the agricultural year. At that time, corn was invariably higher than in those months immediately following the harvest. If the honourable member had gone farther, and compared the prices of the last year with those of former years, he would have found that the variation between July and February, which he complained of, might have been produced, and constantly had been produced, without any importation at all. Nay, if the honourable member looked only a little further into the returns before him, he would find the state of all grain the same with that of wheat. Barley and oats had fallen between the July and February in the same proportion as the higher-priced grain; and he had little doubt that the same means which had produced the fall would ensure the rise again; and that, before July next, wheat would be as high as it had been in the same month last year. He desired particularly to call the attention of the House to the fact of the difference of seasons, as the statement of the honourable baronet was calculated to produce an impression, and it certainly was utterly erroneous.

The honourable and learned member for Kircudbright* was one of those who insisted on some law which should keep up the price of barley and oats. But did the honourable and learned member forget, that in the last year those grains had received a considerable advance on the scale proposed? The honourable member forgot that the central point of oats had been advanced from 21*s.* to 25*s.*, and that of barley from 30*s.* to 33*s.*;—no corresponding advance being made

* Mr. Fergusson.

upon the article of wheat. He was surprised that the honourable and learned member should overlook this point; and that he should not see that 25*s*. was a higher ratio for oats, than 60*s*. was for wheat. He had looked carefully back to the prices of former years; and he found no instance in which the price at which importation should be permitted had been fixed so high as 25*s*. The honourable and learned member seemed to think, too, that there was no difference between the scale of duties now proposed, and the amendment moved by the honourable member for Dorsetshire last year. This impression was a mistaken one. The object of the last year's amendment of the honourable member for Dorsetshire had been to raise the pivot price of wheat from 60*s*. to 64*s*., but to leave the graduation of the scale, both in the ascent and descent of the duty, as it stood; but it was clear, upon the slightest calculation, that, from the beginning to the end of the scale, that change went to make a most important difference.

His honourable friend, the member for Bridgenorth, had announced his hostility to the resolutions proposed, and his intention to suggest new ones. It would have been as well, he thought, if his honourable friend had brought forward his resolutions at once. In fairness, both to the House and to the country, he thought that honourable members who had counter-resolutions to propose, would have done well to have named them on that evening, that they might have gone forth, side by side, with those of ministers, for general consideration. In this there could neither have been any thing objectionable, nor any needless occupation of time; and ministers, if they were not immediately to have the benefit of honourable gentlemen's speeches, might yet have had the advantage of seeing, and perhaps deriving instruction from, their plans. His honourable friend approved neither of the existing law, it appeared, nor of that

proposed; for he said, that if the President of the Board of Trade had brought forward the system of last year, *ipsissimis verbis*, he would have objected to it.

His honourable friend then complained, that the system now proposed was of too complicated a character. Now, he could not see that it was materially more complicated than that of the last year. The scheme now proposed took the two extremes of the scale as it was formed for the last year, and proposed to enact such regulations as, at the price of 70*s*., should let in wheat at a merely nominal duty, and, on the contrary, at the price of 60*s*., should pretty nearly prevent its admission altogether. That was an equitable arrangement, and one which could lead to no inconvenience. When corn was either much wanted here, or at a very low price abroad, it would certainly find its way into the country. Let the House look, however, to what had occurred since last year. It was said, after the bill of last year had been amended in another place, and had been materially altered in effect,—it was said, that in any reconsideration of the subject in a future session, the House ought to proceed with a view to the experience which it would then have obtained. He agreed with his right honourable friend, that that experience had received more consideration than it deserved: 500,000 quarters of wheat, however, had come in when the duty exceeded 20*s*.; therefore, there was a *prima facie* case made out, that 20*s*. was not a sufficient duty to exclude. This fact, then, in the construction of the present measure, had been considered; and it was upon that ground that an attempt was contemplated, without departing from the principle of the last year's bill, or sacrificing any of the views which it had embraced, to quiet the apprehension which had arisen out of the importation at a 20*s*. duty, and to throw an additional drag or impediment in the way, by which foreign

corn, in a given state of the market, was to be admitted. All parties last year had been agreed upon the mischief which would arise from permitting large importations of foreign wheat, when the price in the home market was between 60*s.* and 64*s.* The measure of the present year was calculated to check such importation: it was no deviation from the principle of the last year's bill, or from the manner in which that bill dealt with the subject; but it was so constructed, as to defeat a possible course which it was generally agreed, if put in execution, would prove inconvenient.

He admitted fully that, in the course of the last year, there had been circumstances calculated to produce a larger importation, at given rates of duty, than was likely to occur again. In the first place, the act of November, 1826, had given the Crown the power to admit five hundred thousand quarters of foreign wheat at 12*s.* a quarter duty. That power, it was true, had not been exerted, for the occasion for its exercise had not arisen; but the belief that it would be called into effect, and the contemplation of further changes, had brought a large supply of foreign corn into the warehouses of the country—a larger quantity, probably, than would otherwise have been introduced. The expectation of the admission of the five hundred thousand quarters at 12*s.* duty had failed; and the general measure, upon which something had, perhaps, been calculated, had been defeated in another place; and only a short time was open to get rid of a large supply of a commodity which received no benefit from keeping. The result was, that a sort of panic had seized upon the holders of foreign corn in bond, which had produced considerable loss; it had been taken out of bond at high rates of duty, and rapidly forced into consumption. It was necessary, therefore, in any estimate of what had arisen under the last year's law, to consider these circumstances.

The right honourable the President of the Board of Trade had stated truly, that it was their duty, as practical men, to look at the measure of the present session as one which was to settle what the rule and what the law were, by which all the transactions of the country relating to the land were to be regulated. The question was truly one, the final adjustment of which was not merely deeply desirable, but a matter of paramount necessity; for it was one by which all the acts and business of men's lives were influenced and governed. The object, as it seemed to him, of the House should be, to pass a measure which men might believe, and look upon to be, a lasting and a conclusive one;—an award, if he might be allowed the expression, between the exaggerated prejudices entertained against all freedom of trade on one side, and the exaggerated hopes which might have been conceived by the other;—a measure which, if it was not the very best which could be introduced, might yet be one which would prove an adjustment of the question, so long agitated with so much inconvenience to society;—a question, one of the worst effects of the uncertainty of which was, that some particular class of the community was constantly apprehending that its interests were about to be sacrificed to those of another class; while the duty of the House, as well as its real disposition, was to look upon all interests impartially.

It was for purposes, and with feelings of this description, that the present measure had been submitted to the House. He did not think it the best which might have been brought forward; but he did believe that it was a measure, when duly considered, which, with reference to all the circumstances of the currency and the state of public feeling, was more likely to abate those angry squabbles which the absence of final measures had given rise to, than any other which, in the present condition of the country, could be introduced. As to those who objected to it on the score

that the interests of agriculture were not sufficiently protected, he had already briefly replied to their observations. The honourable member for Somersetshire professed himself pleased with the law of 1815. He could only say to that honourable member, that he lamented, from the bottom of his soul, the mass of evil and miseries and destruction of capital, which that law, in the course of its twelve years' operation, had produced. And he did believe that he could make it distinctly appear, if the moment were a proper one, that the effect of the bill, as far as regarded the agriculturists themselves, had been to keep the prices of produce lower, for those twelve years, than they would have been, even if the trade in corn had been entirely open.

April 22.

The House again resolved itself into a committee on the Corn Trade Acts, and Mr. Grant's Resolution being again put, Mr. Heathcote moved, that the chairman should report progress, and Mr. Calcraft moved, by way of amendment, the adoption of the scale of Duties proposed last session by Mr. Canning. Sir George Philips having inquired, what were the grounds upon which the right honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies adopted the present measure, in preference to that which he had supported and recommended in the last session,

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON rose. He said, that his Majesty's ministers had been placed in rather a difficult situation upon this occasion. No sooner had the House formed itself into a Committee, than up got an honourable member, who moved that they should report progress, and ask leave to sit again. That certainly was not, in his opinion, the way to discuss this measure. The honourable member for Wareham, following that consistent and open course which he usually adopted, had already moved an amendment upon the resolutions proposed to the House; and

the honourable member for Wiltshire had stated it to be his intention to propose an amendment upon the resolutions of last year. Under these circumstances, he had been desirous to hear the various objections which gentlemen had to urge to the resolutions before the committee, before he stated his reasons for supporting them. However, as he had been thus called upon by the honourable baronet, he was perfectly ready, at this stage of the debate, to state those reasons.

But, before he did so, he should advert to one observation which had fallen from the honourable member for Wareham. That honourable member had stated, that, by the present measure, the pivot in the scale of duty had been changed from 60*s.* to 64*s.*, and this he objected to, as a great departure from the measure of last year. Now, he would maintain, that the pivot had not been changed at all in the present measure. If he understood what was meant by the word, it was that point in the scale at which on one side the duty ascended, and on the other descended—it was the level where the ascending and descending duties met. The pivot in the bill last year was fixed at 60*s.* the Winchester, and at 62*s.* the imperial measure. In the present bill, the same level was taken, and at 62*s.* the imperial, and at 60*s.* the Winchester measure—the scale ascended on the one side, and descended on the other. The difference between the two bills arose not as to the pivot which had been fixed upon as affording a sufficient protection to British agriculture, by the imposition of a certain duty when the price of corn ascended above that point, and diminishing the duty when the price of corn fell below it. The point which had been agreed to last year by Parliament, as affording a sufficient protection to British agriculture, was still preserved; but the question now was, whether the scale which had been last year adapted to that point afforded a sufficient protec-

tion. In the statement made by his lamented friend last year, he had declared his wish to give an efficient protection to the British corn grower up to 60*s*. the Winchester, and 62*s*. the imperial measure. With that view, his lamented friend prepared a scale of duties, which remained stationary between 60*s*. and 64*s*. the Winchester measure, and 62*s*. and 66*s*. the imperial measure, and which were increased or diminished as the price of corn rose or fell above this standard. The scale then proposed was considered adequate for the purpose.

The question now before the House was, not whether the price at which that scale had been fixed should be changed, but whether the protection thereby afforded was found to be a sufficient protection to the British corn-grower. In deciding that question, they should look at what had happened since the bill of last year. They would find that a quantity of corn, amounting to 500,000 quarters, had been admitted into the market. Without adverting even to the circumstances under which this corn had been admitted, when they found that such a quantity as 500,000 quarters had been admitted in one month, it must appear evident to them, that the scale of duties proposed in the bill of last year did not afford a sufficient protection to the agricultural interest,—in fact, that protection, which was contemplated by Mr. Canning, on the last occasion when his lamented friend addressed the House upon this subject,—the last time, he believed, that his voice was heard there, where it had been always heard with so much respect. On that occasion, when introducing the temporary bill, after the intended permanent measure had been thrown out in the other House of Parliament, he distinctly stated, that it was a measure to be tried by the test of experience, and that in the next session they would be enabled to judge,

from the working of it, whether it was calculated to afford the desired protection to the agricultural interest.

Now, to the duties imposed by that bill, he would apply the test of experience; and if he found that the importation of foreign corn was not sufficiently checked by them, he was at liberty to support a measure which went to alter that scale of duties. He acted upon the suggestion of his lamented friend, and taking the test of experience as his guide, he felt himself bound to support an amendment of the bill of last session. The principle of Lord Liverpool, and that laid down by his right honourable friend last session was, that up to 60*s*. there should be a sufficient protection to the British corn-grower—that between 60*s*. and 64*s*. per quarter Winchester measure, foreign corn ought to be admitted. The principle, then, with regard to the scale of duties, was so to arrange it, that a sufficient check should be imposed upon the importation of foreign corn, until the price of corn rose to 60*s*. per Winchester measure; that between 60*s*. and 65*s*. its importation should be allowed, but subject to such a check as would prevent it from coming in such quantities, as materially to affect the market; and, when the price rose to 65*s*., the object of the plan was to impose duties sufficient to prevent foreign corn from being imported in large and overwhelming quantities.

Now, on referring to what occurred last year, they would find, that 500,000 quarters of wheat were in warehouse when the bill of last session passed. In consequence of an early and an abundant harvest, the price of corn fell; and this so affected the bonders of foreign corn, that they were anxious to pay the duty then, lest they should have still a higher duty to pay. Accordingly, the quantity of foreign corn which he had already mentioned was taken out of

bond; and it was evident that, under the bill of last session, a similar influx of foreign corn might occur, so as to oppress the British corn-grower. The first object, then, of the Government was to remedy that defect in the bill of last year, and to afford a sufficient protection when the price of corn was from 60*s.* to 65*s.* That object, they conceived, would be effected by adding four shillings to the duty proposed last year, when the price of corn should be at 62*s.*

Other corresponding changes had been made in the ascending and descending scale of duties, which appeared to them calculated to remedy the defects of the bill of last year. The honourable member for Wareham seemed to think, that the duties did not afford sufficient protection when the price of corn was low, but he could not help expressing his surprise, that the honourable member for Preston should characterize the conduct of Government on this question as disingenuous. The honourable member had advanced the charge, upon the ground that the proposed resolutions did not afford protection where it was wanted, but were it was not wanted; namely, when the price of corn was high.

The duties when corn was between 58*s.* and 59*s.* were as high as were intended in the last bill. When corn was 58*s.* and up to 59*s.* the intended duty would amount to 28*s.* 8*d.* Did the honourable member imagine, that foreign corn would be imported subject to that duty when corn was at 58*s.*? He should be glad to know from what part of the world it would come. Notwithstanding the circumstances which, during the last year, tended to encourage the importation of foreign corn, yet when the price was at 58*s.*, the duty, under the bill of last session, prevented, though it did not altogether exclude, the importation of foreign corn. Notwithstanding the fall in the price of corn, and the alarm thus created in the minds of

the holders of foreign corn, when the duty was 28*s.* 8*d.*, what was the fearful quantity of foreign corn taken out of bond? Only 277 quarters. When the duty was at 30*s.*, 426 quarters; when at 32*s.*, 106 quarters; when at 34*s.*, 101 quarters; when at 36*s.*, 53 quarters; when at 38*s.*, 61 quarters were taken out; and when the duty was at 40*s.*, four quarters were taken out in one week, 52 in another, twenty in another, and two in another. Altogether about a thousand quarters were taken out during an entire quarter of a year. A great portion of these dribblings was ordered to be sold out by the foreign merchants even at a loss; as it would not pay for the rent of the warehouses. It was plain, then, that the duty of 28*s.* 8*d.*, when corn was from 58*s.* to 59*s.*, amounted nearly to a prohibition duty. Last autumn, indeed, when the holders of foreign corn became alarmed by the fall in price, about 500,000 quarters were taken out.

Government had, therefore, made out, from the experience of last year,—from the reports which had been received from foreign countries, and from the evidence taken before the House of Lords, that, by the imposition of a duty of 28*s.* 8*d.* when corn was at 58*s.*, there was no risk of any quantity of foreign corn being imported into this country. It should be recollected, that the importer of foreign corn would, in addition to that duty, have to defray the price for which the corn was bought, the price of freight and warehousing, and various other charges, before he could reckon upon any profit upon it. The freest and most open corn market on the continent was that of Rotterdam. It received the corn of Germany by canal navigation, and that of the north of Europe by steam navigation. Now, it had been ascertained, from a comparison of the prices of corn there during the last seven years, that 28*s.* 8*d.* duty, when corn here was at 58*s.*, would afford an adequate protection

to the British corn-grower. He had applied the test of experience to the two scales, that of last year and the present one, and he preferred that which was now proposed. The scale under the present bill was calculated to afford a better protection to the agriculturist. Though he, as well as others, had agreed to the measure of last year, he could not think it a safe one to continue, as it had not proved adequate for the intended object.

He repeated, that he supported the present bill because it would afford a more efficient protection. When the price of corn was from 60*s.* to 65*s.*, under the proposed duty, the importation of foreign corn would be checked: when the price was above 65*s.* the corn from our colonies would come in free; and when the prices were higher, the duties would operate to prevent the importation of an overwhelming quantity of foreign corn. An honourable gentleman opposite had spoken in favour of a fixed duty. Abstractedly, that might look well enough; but when they regarded the circumstances of the country and the wants of the people, they would see the impossibility of adopting such a principle. If a high permanent duty were imposed, then, in periods of scarcity, the poor would be exposed to sufferings and miseries, the infliction of which no claims for protection on the part of the home corn-grower could ever justify. For the advantages, then, which the grower foregoes when corn is high, by the admission of foreign grain, he receives compensation by the imposition of a high rate of duties when corn is at a low price. He receives, in fact, only that remuneration to which he is justly entitled. When legislating upon this subject, they were bound to look to the different and varying circumstances of the country, and to the wants and necessities of its inhabitants. A permanent fixed duty was therefore out of the question. The principle of the present bill was the same as that of the bill

of last year, and it afforded a more effectual protection to the British corn-grower. That principle had been laid down by Mr. Canning last year; it was contained in the memorandum of Lord Liverpool, and he could support it from documents in his possession. In the year 1804, a duty of 24*s.* 3*d.* was imposed, when corn rose to 63*s.* per the Winchester measure. That was, then, to the grower as effectual a protection, up to that price, as the present duty would be. For these and for various other reasons he would support the resolution before the committee.

The committee divided: For the resolution, 202: For the amendment, 58.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE IN NEW SOUTH WALES AND VAN DIEMAN'S LAND.

April 1.

In pursuance of the notice which he had given,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose for leave to bring in a bill "to provide for the Administration of Justice in New South Wales and Van Dieman's Land, and for the more effectual government thereof." Owing to the lateness of the hour, he would not, he said, then enter into the explanation which he had intended to offer, but would make that explanation when the details of the measure should be before the House. The House was aware that the administration of justice in those important colonies were now regulated by an act which would expire in 1829; the object of the bill which he was about to move for leave to introduce, was to provide for the continuance of certain powers contained in the existing act, and also to provide for future alterations in the mode of administering justice. From the peculiar situation in which the population of

those colonies was placed, about two-thirds of the inhabitants having forfeited their civil rights, it was difficult to have the law administered in the manner which prevailed in this country, by means of grand and petty juries. It had been found necessary, therefore, to suspend the system pursued in this country, and provide a jury more peculiarly fitted to the nature of the population. This suspension of the English system he proposed to continue in the new bill, but he intended to make provisions that would gradually, if circumstances should permit it, assimilate the administration of justice in these colonies to that of England. They were not at present in a situation to admit of receiving a legislative assembly; but on the plan pursued with respect to Canada, before it had a legislative assembly, he proposed that they should have a legislative council, composed of twelve or fifteen members, with power to suggest amendments in the administration of affairs, which should be regularly transmitted to this country for approval. These measures would, he hoped, prepare the way for the introduction of a system founded on institutions similar to those of the people, from whom the inhabitants sprung.

Leave was given to bring in the Bill. It was accordingly brought in, and, on the 18th, upon the second reading, Sir James Mackintosh observed, that it did not provide for trial by jury, and that no mention was made in the laws relating to insolvency or bankruptcy.

Mr. HUSKISSON said, that the regulations with respect to bankruptcy and insolvency were omitted in the bill, because he thought the colonial legislature better calculated to regulate those subjects than the House of Commons could be. His great object, throughout the bill, had been to meddle as little with details as possible; which he was sure were always much better arranged upon the spot. As to the trial by jury, the truth was, that the system had been

tried in quarter sessions, and, from the peculiar state of society in that country, found altogether inapplicable. The time was not yet come in which the machinery of that valuable institution could be extended to New South Wales with effect; and to attempt to introduce it would only be to destroy an existing system which was suited to circumstances, and practically worked well already. No man could be better inclined than he was to give the colony the advantage of every institution which the mother-country possessed; but by attempting to go too fast at first, the progress of the good work would be retarded.

EMIGRATION BILL.

April 17.

Mr. Wilmot Horton moved for leave to bring in a Bill, "to enable parishes in England, under given regulations, and for a limited period, to mortgage their poor rates for the purpose of assisting voluntary Emigration." After the measure had been opposed by Mr. Warburton and Mr. Alderman Waithman,

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON said, he should not have risen but for the appeal which had been made to him by the right honourable mover. He did not feel it necessary to discuss the state of the pauper population of England and Ireland, or to advert to the general principles of the emigration committee, because his right honourable friend had intimated his intention of proposing a grant of public money to give effect to those principles. His right honourable friend had assumed, that there was a redundant population which it was desirable to remove. But this general proposition must be looked at with reference to the circumstances of the country; for what might be very properly applicable at one period, was often wholly inapplicable at

another. For instance, at one period of the labours of the emigration committee, they were so impressed with the urgency of a public fund, that they had made application for a certain sum for the immediate removal of paupers in certain parts of England and Scotland. Whereas now, all those persons were employed, and no application had been made for assistance to enable them to emigrate. Thus the necessity of emigration always bore a relation to times and places, and to the purpose for which it was proposed to be carried into effect; in the same way that a redundant population bore a proportion to the means of giving it employment. There was no part of Europe, that was settled and quiet, in which the population was not increasing in the same rapid ratio as in this country; and when we complained of the increase of population, it should be recollected, that the number of paupers dependent on alms in the Netherlands was greater than it was in this country. In other parts of the continent there was the same redundancy and the same difficulties. He had been asked by his right honourable friend, whether he thought it would not be a beneficial use of the public money, to appropriate it to the emigration of a portion of our pauper population to the colonies? Before he could give a decisive answer to such a question, he should wish to be assured that the *data* on which his right honourable friend had grounded the assumption of benefit were clear and undoubted. He apprehended, however, that some of his grounds would fail him. If a plan of emigration were carried extensively into effect, might there not be reason to apprehend, that an extensive emigration to the colonies, by causing a glut of population there, and creating a production beyond any demand the emigrants could obtain for it in their interchange with other countries, might lead to an equal degree of suffering with that from which it was sought to relieve them by sending them out? If the advantages pointed out by his right honourable friend

could be obtained, he would not say that money applied to the promotion of emigration would not be well laid out. But, as his right honourable friend intended to bring forward a proposition to that effect, he would postpone what he had to say on that subject until it came regularly before the House. The bill, he admitted, was entitled to the utmost consideration; and what he approved of highly in it was, that it was a permissive and not an obligatory measure, and that there were guards and checks to prevent any very rapid or perilous trial of the experiment. He would promise to bestow the most attentive consideration upon it, and whether the plan of his right honourable friend were adopted or not, the utmost praise was due to him for the ability and perseverance with which, amidst the pressure of official duties, he had devoted himself to the benevolent object of ameliorating the condition of the pauper population of the country.

Leave was given to bring in a bill.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT OF CANADA.

May 2.

In pursuance of the notice, that he would this day move for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the state of the Civil Government of Canada,

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON rose, and spoke in substance as follows:—*

The subject to which I am about to call the attention of the House, on the present occasion, is one which, however it may bear—and it chiefly does bear—upon interests and feelings in a great degree removed from those which ordinarily affect ourselves, is nevertheless a matter of considerable importance. The question which I wish at this time to induce the House to investigate is, whether those exten-

* Assisted by Mr. Huskisson's MS. notes.

sive, valuable, and fertile possessions of the Crown, known under the name of the Canadas, are or are not administered under a system of civil government, adapted to the wants, the well-being, and the happiness of nearly a million of British subjects, and to the permanent maintenance of those intimate relations of allegiance and protection, which ought always to exist between the colonies and the mother country. If, upon inquiry, it shall be found, that the present system of government in those states is not well adapted to all these purposes, and that the remedy for the evil cannot be applied without the authority of parliament—it will be for parliament to deal with the question, with a view to the introduction of such modifications, improvements, and alterations in the existing system, as may appear necessary.

But, Sir, though considerable evils, and great and acknowledged defects may be found to exist in the present system, and some oversights may be discovered in its administration, it by no means follows, that any particular individual is responsible, or can be justly accused of occasioning those imperfections. Sir, the constitution under which the Canadas are now governed, was devised and introduced by some of the greatest statesmen that ever appeared within these walls. But when we consider how little the country in question was then known, and to what a limited extent its resources and interests were understood, it will not appear matter of astonishment, that in a country like Canada, imperfectly known, and so thinly peopled as it was when the present form of civil government was established, the system devised for its government should have been found extremely defective. Neither will it appear unaccountable, that, in the details of this system, there should be many difficulties which require to be removed, many imperfections which require a remedy, many omissions which it is now our duty to supply.

In the great and leading principle of the present system

—the strict maintenance, on the one hand, of good faith towards the descendants of the native French population in Lower Canada, and on the other, of extending to that province, as far as consistent with our engagements towards them, all the advantages of British institutions and British laws—there can, I think, be no difference of opinion in this House. Neither, fortunately, can there be any as to the right of this House to examine fully into the merits or defects of the present constitution of Canada, as established by the act which first granted that constitution—and to revise it in such manner, as to us may appear proper. I mean the celebrated Quebec Act of 1791. It is unnecessary to enter into any abstract or general argument upon this point; because not only does this right appear to be expressly reserved and declared by the very wording of the preamble of this act; but if there could be any doubt on this point, it would be at once removed by a reference to the declarations made in this House at the time when it was introduced. On that occasion, Mr. Pitt expressly provided, that nothing which it contained should be held as not liable to such further alterations and amendments as circumstances might, from time to time, appear to require. It carries the principle of modification or repeal, even to the reserved lands, allotted for the use and maintenance of the Established Church in Canada. It is, therefore, clearly apparent, that we are, at present, quite as much at liberty to consider the act of 1791, with reference to the amendment of any imperfection or defect contained in it, as we are at liberty to consider, in a similar manner, any other act of the legislature. I own that I cannot but think it very fortunate, that no doubt can exist upon this point. I am glad that the supreme power of the British Parliament to deal with defects or difficulties of this nature, and to reform the previous act of the Legislature, in regard to the government of our Canadian territories, cannot be dis-

puted. I am the rather disposed to rejoice at this circumstance, because, standing aloof, as we do, from the party feelings and local jealousies of the Canadians, our decision will be the more respected; first, as coming from a high and competent authority, and next, on account of our manifest impartiality. On both these grounds I am satisfied that the final determination of Parliament, with regard to the civil government of the Canadas, will be cheerfully received, and readily acquiesced in. In this view of the subject I confess I feel sanguine as to the result of our interference. I consider it calculated to allay the animosities of the Canadians, and, if wisely conducted, well adapted to place the system of government in our North American territories on a satisfactory and permanent footing; thus conducting at once to the manifest benefit of the colonies, and to the interests of the mother country.

Now, Sir, I will not fatigue the House with any long detail of the constitutional and legal history of Canada, since it was first ceded to his Majesty's Government by the peace of 1763. But it is necessary to take a short review of the principal measures which have since been adopted by the Crown and by Parliament, for the government and settlement of these provinces. By the treaty of Paris in 1763, Canada was ceded to the British Crown, without any stipulation or obligation whatever with respect to the mode in which the Government was to be administered. So far from there being any condition or qualification connected with the surrender of these provinces, they were yielded up to England by France in full sovereignty and complete possession, as in the case of a new conquest. Perhaps it may be necessary to state, that the country was settled by the French about the year 1660, when the first French governor was appointed. At that time the population was principally, if not wholly, confined to the banks of the river St. Lawrence, and the

two towns then built, namely Montreal and Quebec; and at the period of the conquest the French settlers did not exceed sixty-five thousand. This was the utmost extent of the colony at this epoch of its history. But though the population was so very limited, and although it was placed under circumstances, and with wants and necessities, so different from what it could possibly have experienced in the mother country, it was nevertheless thought wise and just by the French government, to graft on so extremely limited a stock, the whole of the feudal system of France, as it existed in all its odious deformities, about the middle of the seventeenth century. We may apply to this conduct what has been said of those who built country seats about the same period—that they adopted all the faults and sacrifices of comfort observable at Versailles, whilst they still wanted its grandeur. Such was the state of Canada under the French régime. The feudal system flourished in all its vigour among a small population, and in the midst of a desert. The mother country grafted upon the other institutions of her colony a law of succession—not the general French law of succession, which was that of primogeniture, but a system denominated "the Custom of Paris." So that, connecting the effects of this law of succession with the influence of the feudal system in Canada, while under the dominion of the French, the consequences to the colony were any thing rather than beneficial. The lords paramount held directly under the Crown, and granted certain portions of lands to their vassals. These seignories (according to the law of succession to which I have alluded) were not capable of severance; but have been divided and subdivided, ever since the period of their first institution, because the holder of the land owed suit and service to the lord paramount. Now, however, they are subdivided into shares so minute as to be greatly to the advantage of those who administer the

existing system of civil law; at the same time that the circumstance is equally disadvantageous to the interests of persons possessing, or claiming to possess, property in them. Such is the natural consequence and effect of the complicated state of tenures in the Canadas. It was no longer ago than this morning that I saw in a Canada paper an advertisement of the sale of a one-thirteenth of a hundredth part of a lordship. Some of the notices of sale in these colonies are extremely curious, and comprehend fractional parts of fractions of estates, of a nature to puzzle Mr. Finlayson himself, with all his skill in figures. We read constantly of the third of a seventh, and the half of a sixth of a lordship to be disposed of. I recollect a notice of the sale of a forty-fourth of a fourth of a tenth of a sixth share of an estate; another, of an eleventh of a fourth of a fifth of a sixth; and another of a forty-fourth of a fifth of a sixth. Under this curious and rather puzzling state of the law, by which seignories are divided into such impracticable shares, it is almost impossible for any individual to tell to whom it is that he owes suit and service. Yet a great many duties are imposed under the feudal system, some of them to be paid in kind, and some in money. For instance, there are fines, annual duties on all alienations of property, and various rights and duties of a most vexatious and harassing nature.

Sir, very shortly after the treaty, by which, in 1763, Canada was ceded to the Crown, the King of England issued a proclamation, inviting such of his subjects as were so disposed to settle in the newly-acquired territory; declaring the royal intention shortly to confer a Legislative Assembly on the colony, and informing them, that all persons settling in the country should forthwith enjoy the benefit and protection derivable from British laws and courts of judicature. Until the year 1774, British laws

were, as far as possible, introduced and carried into effect in the colony. British courts of justice were established, with proper judges to administer the law, and the whole system of British judicature was set on foot, according to the terms of his Majesty's proclamation. The other part of the proclamation, however, containing an assurance relative to the appointment of a Legislative Assembly, was not carried into effect. In 1774, from the situation in which other provinces of America, then belonging to the Crown, were placed, it was not thought expedient, by the government of the day, to grant a Legislative Assembly to Canada. It appeared, about this time, that the Canadians were greatly attached to their original system of legislation, and not well satisfied with that more recently introduced amongst them. Accordingly, it being thought desirable to conciliate the loyalty, affection, and good-will, of our Canadian subjects at that juncture, in 1774 it was, for the first time, mentioned in Parliament, that it would be desirable to pass an act of the legislature, not for the purpose of making good the assurance of 1763, but to recall all the pledges relative to the formation of a system of British jurisprudence, and the establishment of British courts of justice. A bill was accordingly brought into the House of Commons, for the purpose of effecting this object. The preamble of the act was suggested by, and drawn up in compliance with, the wishes and feelings of the Canadians, and went upon the principle, that the French laws, to which they had been long accustomed, were well adapted to their situation and circumstances. The bill itself recalls all the declarations contained in the proclamation of 1763; and re-establishes the French laws and customs as they regard property, and the system of civil law, including the Custom of Paris. However, the same act makes provisions for retaining the administration of the criminal law of

England in Canada ; which, from 1774, was to be governed by the civil law of France, and the criminal code of England.

Between the years 1763 and 1774, the Crown had proceeded to make grants of land in Canada, with a view to the settlement of the colony, by an additional number of new inhabitants. In all grants out of immediate lordships, the lands were held under tenures of free or common soccage, as contradistinguished from seignories. The holders were placed under the influence of an unintelligible system of law. One estate was held by common soccage, another by a different tenure. With respect to civil rights, as I have already said, the French law and administration was established ; but the English system of jurisprudence prevailed in criminal matters. In the same year, 1774, another important act, and one well calculated to conciliate the favourable feelings and loyalty of the Canadians towards the Crown, received the sanction of the legislature. By this act, it was provided, that all customs and duties (and they were numerous, onerous, and oppressive), heretofore imposed on the colonists by France, and from the date of the conquest to that year payable to England, should thenceforth and for ever cease and determine. In lieu of these imposts, the act appointed other duties of a more easy and equitable nature ; the produce of which was to be appropriated, not to the advantage of the mother country, but to defray the expenses necessarily attendant on the administration of civil justice, and the maintenance of the local government of Canada.

In the memorable year 1774, besides these two boons to the Canadians—the restoration of the system of civil law, of which they approved and under which they had before lived, and the abolition of the French duties—another was conferred. This consisted in the recognition,

by this country, of the established religion, and in a provision being made for its maintenance and support; —a boon which I sincerely trust may never be withdrawn. I have spoken of these measures adopted by England, as boons to the Canadians; for such they were certainly considered by them at the time, whatever may have been the subsequent effects of one of them: suffice it to say, they were afforded in a spirit of conciliation, and accepted with feelings of gratitude and satisfaction. Of the recognition and establishment of the prevailing religion in Canada, in 1774, I have already spoken in terms of approbation, and have only to repeat my hope, that the gift may never be disturbed. No doubt, it was thankfully received, and is gratefully remembered. The restoration of the system of French law, and administration in civil cases, was, in all probability, quite as much prized at the time by the parties, as the provision made for recognising their religious faith. I am satisfied, however, that if not then restored and re-established, the laws in question (which are unfriendly to commerce, and repugnant to enlightened principles of unrestricted dealing) would soon have disappeared under the influence of British enterprise. But, passing by this topic for the present, I may be allowed to remark, that the abolition of the French duties, and the imposition of other and less burthensome taxes, the proceeds of which were applied to the support of the Colonial Government and institutions, was a considerable benefit to the Canadians.

In 1778, a law was passed in this country, which, although not immediately bearing upon, or having reference to, Canada, was yet of considerable importance, as well to that as to our other colonies. I allude to the Declaratory act, by which this country relinquished all future right to tax its colonies; granting them the power to impose duties

themselves, which duties were to be applied to the support of their own institutions and establishments, and were not to form part of the revenue of Great Britain. At this time there existed, perhaps, a doubt, as to whether the act applied to Canada. Some thought that the bill was only meant to apply to our colonies in the West-Indies, and to those places in America that retained their allegiance to England, and had legislative assemblies of their own, which were hereby authorised to tax themselves. But, however the fact might be, in this state Canada remained until the year 1791, when it was thought necessary by Mr. Pitt, to introduce his bill, since known by the appellation of the "Quebec Act." This law attracted more notice at the time of its enactment, principally on account of the then state of parties in the House of Commons, than it might, in all probability, have otherwise done, by reason of its intrinsic interest or importance. Mr. Pitt thought it no more than what was due to the growing importance and wealth of Canada, to give that colony a popular representation. By one of the provisions of this act, the right and control over all imposts was vested in an assembly, to be so constituted. We should bear this circumstance in mind, because what now exists has reference to this act. By the act of 1774, the system of civil law of the colony was established, and provisions were made for the support of its government, by means of moderate duties then imposed. Under the act of 1791, all duties were to be imposed and appropriated as the colonial legislature should determine. Another object of the act was, to divide the colony into two separate provinces—Upper and Lower Canada,—giving to each a separate legislature. It was considered desirable to encourage loyalists and disbanded soldiers to become settlers in Upper Canada, where there were no French settlers, and where no feudal system was

in operation. The act provided, that in the province of Lower Canada, the legislative assembly should consist of not less than fifty members, while in Upper Canada (then about to be settled) the population being more scanty, the minimum of members of assembly was fixed at fifteen. In Upper Canada the assembly was to be increased, as the province should become more thickly peopled. These details were left to those who administered the government in the colony. The gallant officer who administered the government of Canada in 1792, divided the lower province into eighteen counties, each sending two members to the assembly: three counties sending each one representative; two cities privileged to elect four members; one town sending two members, and one electing one representative; making a total of fifty. What I complain of is, that the representation was not equally distributed. It was a great error to take the density of population many years ago, and apply it, as a permanent standard, to the number of representatives to be chosen for particular places and departments. The effect of this erroneous principle has necessarily been, to throw the chief power of representation into the hands of the seignories. The same defect exists in Upper as in Lower Canada. The English settlers are excluded from a fair participation in what ought to be a popular representation, and the power of election is thrown into the hands of the descendants of the French.

Sir, I state these complaints with the more confidence, because, in all parts of Canada, it is agreed that the present sytem works so ill as to stand in need of alteration. Under the present practice, the English settler is exposed to great inconvenience, and suffers an exclusion from advantages, of which it is only just that he should enjoy a reasonable share. I allude now to the condition of our countrymen in Lower Canada; but, in doing so, I do not desire to make it

a matter of charge against those who represent the French seignories, that they act as they do. It is the system, and not the individuals, that requires reformation. There is no possibility of suing or being sued, except in the French courts, and according to the French form and practice—no mode of transacting commercial business, except under the French customs, now obsolete in France itself. In Lower Canada, they go upon the law and system of feudal tenure, and the law is more incapable of ever being improved or modified by the progress of information and knowledge, than if it still remained the system of France and the model of her dependencies. Here in the midst of a wilderness flourishes the French feudal system, and the custom of Paris of centuries ago. The result is, that Englishmen in Canada are as much like aliens and settlers in foreign land, as an equal number of British subjects, who should have sat down in the centre of France in the thirteenth century.

It is not, therefore, to be wondered at, Sir, that our countrymen have had to encounter considerable difficulty in Lower Canada, and that but a slow progress has been made towards the settlement of that province, as compared with the Upper. In fact, the inconvenience of the existing condition of things cannot be well understood in this country. In this colony the law of mortgage is in the worst state. The registration of deeds is another point deserving attention; and the laws and usages relating to the formation of roads are those of the old French feudal system. The consequence has been, that in the last fifteen years not one single road-bill has been passed by the legislative assembly of that province. Thus, there is no opportunity afforded to the English townships of communicating with the river St. Lawrence, except by some of its tributary streams, on account of the interposition of the seignories between them and that river. In the same manner, another part of what

I consider an important public duty in a legislative assembly is overlooked. I mean the education of the children of the settlers. That is a subject never thought of. In point of fact, the state of things is such, that the settlers feel more disposed to connect themselves with those districts which border on the United States, where they can have their wants of this description supplied, and receive the benefits of the administration of justice, than to remain in the country to which they owe allegiance.

These evils, Sir, have, I regret to say, been of some standing, but they have been more severely felt, as the capital and population of this country have been directed to these colonies, and as they have become of greater importance to the interests of the mother country. Having become sensible of the evil, the question now arises as to what remedy shall be applied to it. One was suggested, and attempted to be carried into effect, about four years back, by which the two legislatures were to be incorporated into one; that is, the Upper, or English part of the province, was to be reunited under one Government, with the French or Lower part of it. There were various grounds on which the bill which my right honourable friend introduced with that view were opposed; but the principal one, I believe, was the lateness of the period of the session at which it was brought forward. That bill, therefore, did not pass. Whether the remedy it proposed is the best that can be imagined, I will not undertake to say; but it is certainly open to many serious objections. Those, however, will be proper subjects for the consideration of the committee which I mean to propose. Another remedy that has been suggested is to form all the English townships, as they are, for the sake of distinction, called, into a third province. To that scheme also the objections are numerous and serious. Indeed, none have been devised that are not subject

to many objections. It will be the duty of the committee to point out that course which presents the fewest, to reconcile the conflicting pretensions of the different parties, and thus to remove the great obstacles to the improvement of this important colony.

But, Sir, these are not the only considerations that have induced me to recommend the House to take into its consideration the state of the civil government of Canada. Besides the obstacles I have mentioned, as lying in the way of the happiness of this colony, another, of a most formidable nature, has grown up out of the state of the representative system, as I have described it. I allude to the disputes which have arisen, concerning the extent of control which the colonial legislature should have over the public revenue of the colony and its fiscal regulations. I have already stated that, in 1774, all the taxes that had been imposed under the French régime were abrogated, and other duties levied in their stead, which were appropriated by the Crown to defray the expenses of the administration of justice, and of the civil establishment of the colony. The duties, thus levied in lieu of the old French ones, I may describe technically as the permanent revenue of the Crown. It amounts to about 35,000*l.* per annum, and has been applied to the purposes for which it was appropriated by the act of 1774. Besides this, the Crown has a small revenue called "the casualty revenue," which consists of fines, forfeitures, and other in-comings, belonging to the Crown, as the Lord Paramount. This revenue amounts to about 5,000*l.* per annum, and is at the absolute disposal of the Crown; but this also has been appropriated to the civil services of the country. The remaining revenue of the colony arises from taxes imposed since 1791, by the colonial legislature. Part of this revenue the Assembly has appropriated specifically to discharge the expenses of its

own sittings, and part to the improvement of the navigation of the river St. Lawrence. The remainder has been appropriated by the legislature to the different expenses of the colony generally. The amount thus collected by the taxes imposed by the Assembly has been, upon an average, about 140,000*l.* per annum. There are also some small sums raised, by virtue of acts of this House, passed for the purpose of regulating the trade of the colony.

For some time after the passing of the act in 1774, nothing could go on more smoothly than the system it established. The Crown had divested itself of the power it had over the permanent revenue; and the sum raised under that name, although small, was sufficient for the maintenance of the civil service, and of the judicial establishments. Afterwards, however, the necessity of making roads, and numerous other expenses, incidental to a rising colony, rendered this sum insufficient. It became necessary, therefore, to raise a larger sum; and this was done by the authority of the House of Assembly. By what degrees, in what manner, and under what circumstances, a difference grew up between the local legislature and the executive government, it is not necessary for me to trace, for any of the purposes which I have now in view. The present state of the controversy, however, is of this nature. The House of Assembly of Lower Canada claims the right of appropriating the permanent revenue, item by item; that is to say, the right of deciding what branches of the civil service, and what of the judicial establishments, should receive their incomes, and in what portions, from this fund. On the other part, it is maintained, and, as it appears to me, in a manner absolutely incontrovertible in law, that the Crown possesses over this revenue a discretionary power, as to the proportions in which it is to be distributed, provided it be for purposes directed by the act. I believe there is no lawyer

who will deny, that as long as the Crown appropriates that revenue to the administration of justice in Canada, and to its civil government, pursuant to the words of the Act of 1774 —as long as it fulfils all the conditions required by good faith towards the Canadians,—it has a right to prescribe the mode in which the revenue, consistently with that Act, shall be expended. There is no one who will not say, that the pretensions of the legislative body to take the whole management of this money into its own hands, are neither founded in law nor practice. On the other hand, the House of Assembly holding the public purse in its hands, having the complete command of the general revenue, in order to enforce its unreasonable pretensions, have refused to appropriate any part of the larger revenue, of which they have the command, unless the appropriation of the permanent Crown revenue be given up to them also.

This, Sir, is the state of the controversy between the executive and legislative body in Canada. The consequences of the agitation of such a question as this, in which both parties have stood upon their extreme rights, have been most unfortunate. One of the consequences has been, the necessity under which the representative of the King has found himself, of appropriating money for the necessary services of the colony, without the sanction of the colonial legislature. Such a thing as this, in a country with a legislative assembly, can only be justified by the absolute necessity of preventing general confusion, and the subversion of the government. I do not stand here—living as I do, in a country where the rights of the popular branch of the legislature to control the expenditure of the money it raises are so well known and universally acknowledged—to defend the abstract propriety of a governor of a colony, appropriating its revenue without the sanction of an act of the legislature, as required by law; but, pressed by neces-

sity, it ought not, perhaps, to be wondered at, however we may regret the necessity, that a governor should take all the means in his power to maintain the tranquillity of the colony committed to his charge. When principles are pressed to the extreme, a legislature may, no doubt, distress the executive government of a country, and so wear it out by continued opposition, as to have the point in dispute conceded; but what, in the mean time, are the unfortunate results to the people?—what, in the midst of these conflicts, has been the result to the province of Canada? Nothing is expended, of the money raised in this irregular manner, but what is absolutely necessary to carry on the government of the province: all improvement is at a stand, the roads are neglected, education overlooked, the public buildings suffered to fall to decay, and the country generally brought to such a state that there is not a Canadian whose interests do not suffer.

Sir, the recurrence of such a state of things it is our duty to prevent; and I think I have made out a case sufficient to convince the House, that, if we have the right and the power, the time is arrived which warrants me in calling upon Parliament to interpose its authority, for the purpose of quieting these feuds, and of establishing such a system of civil government in Canada, as may give a fair share to all parties in the province, of the administration of the revenues, so as to render them available for the improvement of the country—such a system as will, on the one hand, give to the Legislative Assembly the power of directing the whole application of the funds appropriated for the internal improvement of the province; and, on the other, restrain them from the exercise of any authority over what I may call the civil list. Every man who knows any thing of the country must be aware of the unfitness of the King's representative in the government, and the

judicial establishment for the administration of criminal justice, which is the same as that of England, depending for their stipends upon the varying judgments of a popular assembly. The inexpediency of this, with regard to the judicial establishment, which in its administration of justice might often come into collision with the members of the Assembly, whose judgment is every year to regulate the reward of their services, must be particularly obvious. Judges have duties to perform, which render it essential that they should be perfectly independent.

I trust I need say no more to convince the House, that the system wished to be established by the Canadian legislature is not compatible with the independence and dignity, either of the King's representative or of the criminal judges. Out of what particular fund these charges should be defrayed, I am not prepared to say; but the present plan of paying a fixed sum out of a variable revenue, I certainly think might be amended. I think some mode might be found, for establishing what I have styled the civil list; from which the salaries of the judicial and other departments should be granted for life, or in any other way that would answer the object I have in view. The remainder of the revenue should then be left at the free disposal of the Colonial legislature. And I must here, in justice to the King's government in Canada, claim for them their due. So far were they from wishing to have the control over any further sum than that to which I have alluded, that they have never hesitated, during the whole of these troubles, to lay before the legislature of the province an account of the application of the revenue, in order that the Assembly might be assured there was no misapplication of it. From this it is evident, that the government there are perfectly willing to accede to the suggestion I have just made, respecting the share of control which it shall have over the colonial revenue.

Sir, I do not think there are any other topics connected with the present state of Canada, which would justify me in detaining the House longer, as I trust I have said sufficient to support me in the motion with which I shall conclude. There are two grounds on which I principally rest. The first, is the state of the representative system in Lower Canada, and the situation of the revenue in respect to the administration of justice; the second, is the controversy which has grown up respecting the powers of the executive and legislative bodies. The case I have made out on those two points is sufficient, I trust, to entitle me to the committee for which I am about to move.

Sir, I should now have concluded all that I feel it necessary to state to the House on the present occasion, if I had not witnessed in some quarters, and I may say in some degree in this House, a disposition to think that all enquiry and concern about Canada are unnecessary, and that the public interest of this country would be best consulted by our at once relinquishing all controul and dominion over these possessions. Sir, it is very easy, but I must say it is the proof of a very shallow mind, to lay down a rule of this sort. In British America there are nearly a million of our fellow-subjects, born like ourselves in allegiance to the Crown of this country, anxious to remain in that allegiance,—fulfilling all the duties of it, and having as good a right as ourselves to claim for their persons and property the protection which is the consequence of that allegiance. Is this country, without necessity, without that right being challenged by any one, to incur the indelible disgrace of withdrawing that protection? In contemplating such a question, I will not allow myself to say one word of the advantages, naval, commercial, and political, which we derive from our connexion with our colonies. But I may be allowed to speak of the political character of the country—of the moral impression throughout the world of such a

abandonment as is here proposed. I may be allowed to say, that England cannot afford to be little. She must be what she is, or nothing. It is not Canada estimated in pounds, shillings, and pence—but the proudest trophies of British valour, but the character of British faith, but the honour of the British name, which we shall cast off, if upon such considerations as I have heard, we cast off Canada from our protection. We cannot part with our dominions there, without doing an injustice to their fidelity and tried attachment, and tarnishing the national honour. We are not, Sir, at liberty to forego the high and important duties imposed on us by our relative situation towards those colonies. It is a country where no distinctions prevail, such as disturb some of our other territorial possessions abroad. There are no distinctions of castes, no slavery, which tend to engender dissention and disaffection. We have every where displayed marks of a paternal government, and planted improvement, not only on our colonies there, but wherever our empire is acknowledged.

Sir, England is the parent of many flourishing colonies—one of them is become an empire among the most powerful in the world. In every quarter of the globe we have planted the seeds of freedom, civilization, and Christianity. To every quarter of the globe we have carried the language, the free institutions, the system of laws, which prevail in this country;—in every quarter they are fructifying and making progress; and if it be said by some selfish calculator, that we have done all this at the expense of sacrifices which we ought not to have made, my answer is,—in spite of these sacrifices, we are still the first and happiest people in the old world; and, whilst this is our lot, let us rejoice rather in that rich harvest of glory, which must belong to a nation that has laid the foundation of similar happiness and prosperity to other nations, kindred in blood, in habits, and in feelings to ourselves.

But, Sir, whether Canada be to remain for ever dependent on England, or to become an independent state—not, I trust, by hostile separation, but by amicable arrangement—it is nevertheless the duty, as it is the interest, of this country, to imbue it with English feeling, and to benefit it by English laws and English institutions. I move, Sir, "That a Select Committee be appointed, to inquire into the state of the Civil Government of Canada, as established by the Act 31 Geo. III., c. 31, and to report their observations and opinions thereupon to the House."

The motion was agreed to, and a committee appointed.

SIR FRANCIS BURDETT'S MOTION FOR A COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE LAWS AFFECTING THE ROMAN CATHOLICS.

May 12.

On the 8th of May, Sir Francis Burdett moved, "That this House do resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the State of the Laws affecting his Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, in Great Britain and Ireland, with a view to such final and conciliatory adjustment, as may be conducive to the peace and strength of the United Kingdom, to the stability of the Protestant Establishment, and to the general satisfaction and concord of all classes of his Majesty's subjects." The debate was adjourned to the 9th, and again to the 12th; when

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON rose and said:—*

I was so exhausted when I offered myself to your notice at a late hour on Friday night, and the House manifested, by such unequivocal indications, that it was much in the same state, that I confess, Sir, I was not sorry that an adjournment was proposed; and if I was not sorry then, I am much less so now, when the postponement of the question has had the effect of preventing the able and eloquent

* From Mr. Huskisson's MS. notes.

speech of my right honourable friend who spoke first this evening* from being either lost, or from being that with which the debate would have closed. For although I was then ready to give a silent vote, it was, I own, my wish to accompany that vote with some explanation and record of the feelings by which it would have been guided and directed.

Having been enabled, by the indulgence of the House on former occasions, to state my general sentiments on this great question, and having been present, I may say, at all the many and protracted debates which have taken place upon it, since the period of the Union, with the exception of that of last year, when I was kept away by illness—and not being therefore one of those "buds of genius," one of those "young germs" just coming forth, whom my learned friend, the Attorney General, invites to retire from the debate, and improve their minds by reading all the journals of the House—I feel that I should abuse the patience of the House, if I were to enter into a laboured examination of a question so completely exhausted, that I believe no man can expect, either in the way of argument or illustration—either by drawing upon the stores of history, or by referring to contemporaneous proceedings in other countries —to infuse any thing like new life into the enquiry.

I do not except from this remark the great use which has been made, on the present occasion, of the treaty of Limerick, and of the transactions which took place at the time of the Irish Union. In respect to the treaty of Limerick, I fairly own that I differ very little, if at all, from the view taken of it by the Solicitor-General, and by my right honourable friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department. As a friend to Catholic concession, on clearer and stronger grounds, I regret that this treaty has been pressed into the service of the Petitioners, and by a

* Mr. Charles Grant.

strained construction put so forward in the argument upon their claims. I further regret it, in common with my right honourable friend, because it cannot be so construed without casting a doubt upon the character of this country, and without imputing to one of its most justly honoured monarchs, and to some of its most patriotic statesmen, conduct the most odious and detestable—that of having grossly violated their plighted word, and of having wantonly oppressed the weak and the fallen, at the expense of sacrificing the public faith and honour of their country. This, Sir, is all that I shall say on this part of the subject, except that I would venture to suggest to those who have brought it forward to imitate the example of my right honourable friend, and to promise never again to mention the treaty of Limerick, in connection with this question. Sure, I am, for one, and I believe I speak the feelings of many in this House, that if it was pressed upon me solely by the consideration of the treaty of Limerick, I should be very indifferent about the issue.

Then, Sir, in respect to the pledges or assurances said to have been given by Mr. Pitt, immediately before the Union; I am quite confident, with my right honourable friend, that there were no such pledges entered into. The right honourable gentleman, the knight of Kerry, was at that time in office in Ireland. I, Sir, was in office in this country, in an inferior situation certainly; but one which, independent of private habits of friendship, placed me in confidential relations both with Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas. And here allow me just to say, in passing, that although taking a different line from that adopted by the right honourable gentleman in Ireland, I relinquished my office, because Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas relinquished their situations in the cabinet, I can nevertheless most fully confirm what was stated by the right honourable the knight of Kerry, in

explanation, on a former night. I was strongly and warmly pressed by both of the ministers to whom I have referred not to retire. I was repeatedly told by them, as he was, that retiring ought not to go beyond the cabinet, and that I should best serve the interests of the Catholics by remaining at my post. I relinquished it from various considerations, and most gladly would I now and for ever relinquish any pretensions which I may have to office, if by so doing, I could only advance, were it by one week, the final settlement of this great question.

But, Sir, if there were no pledges, I am bound to acknowledge that there were conversations and communications, which, with sober and temperate men—men not only attached to the Catholic interest, but also men attached to the Protestant establishment in Ireland, and to the preservation of that country to the Crown of Great Britain,—had an influence in determining their conduct in that struggle of party, which terminated in the Union. Speaking from recollection, I think I may affirm, that seeing what had passed between 1793, when the elective franchise was granted, and 1799, including the rebellion, and the hair-breadth escapes which Ireland had then had, in respect to foreign invasion—foreseeing probably also the future consequences of the law of 1793, Mr. Pitt was strongly impressed with an opinion, that the best chance of preserving the established church in Ireland, was by infusing and incorporating it with the Protestant establishment of this country—that it was by this unity and identification, that it would acquire strength, solidity, and permanency. On the other hand, he was equally impressed with an opinion, that the claims of the Catholics, which, if granted in the separate legislature of Ireland, would infallibly lead to the overthrow of the Protestant establishment, and which, if refused, would ultimately lead to the

risk of the separation of the two kingdoms, might by a legislative union and incorporation be safely considered, and, as far as his judgment went, conceded in an imperial Parliament.

This, Sir, was the general conception of Mr. Pitt—a conception worthy of his extensive mind and statesman-like capacity. I really believe that the measure of the Union was favourably viewed by many, friendly to the peace and harmony of the two kingdoms, both Protestants and Catholics, upon this great consideration;—that, from deference to it, many were induced to overcome their natural reluctance to acquiesce in the sacrifice of their independent legislative existence;—that with the vivid recollections which the good and wise retained of the horrors of the evil conflict then scarcely closed, with the fearful forebodings of future collisions, they were, as Mr. Pitt was, anxious to provide for the stability and permanence of the connection between the two countries, for the common safety, for the security of life and property in Ireland, by the surrender of some of those national feelings which were otherwise dear to them as an ancient state.

To the extent of these inferences, to the encouragement of these hopes, I think the communications did directly tend. Now, mark the result. The Established Church, the Protestant interest, the party that had much to lose and nothing to gain in a separate existence, have obtained from the Union all that was in their expectation. The Catholics —the party which had the prospect of acquiring the ascendancy in their separate legislature, and especially after the act of 1793, have seen none of their expectations realized. They were willing to have them tempered and moderated by the imperial Parliament, but they were not prepared to forego them altogether. They retain their 'vantage ground acquired in 1793. In that position they are impregnable.

But by the Union it has been so long flanked and turned, that they have remained in it ever since, unable to move forward, and to follow up the natural advantages which, but for the Union, they would have attained. Denying, therefore, that any thing of pledge, or assurance, was given at the time of the Union, I must admit, that the known views and opinions of the great statesman by whom that measure was effected, had a considerable moral influence in contributing to its success; and that there has been great disappointment, but no breach of compact. Looking to that disappointment, and allowing for the sore feelings which it is calculated to excite in the Catholic community, I have always considered that the argument so powerfully urged on Friday, by the honourable member for the county of Waterford,* namely, the feeling of the Irish Catholic that, but for the Union, he should have been able to right himself,—is one which makes a forcible appeal, if not to strict justice, at least to our equity and our generosity.

My view, then, Sir, of this momentous subject remains the same as it has uniformly been since it was first discussed in the United Parliament.

I have retired from every successive discussion, whether successful or not, with an increased sense of the growing urgency of concession; and, happen what may this night, I shall retire from the discussion, with increased confidence that its final attainment cannot be much longer delayed.

During the last quarter of a century, this subject has occupied more of the time and deliberations of this House —has called forth in its support the efforts and eloquence of more great men—than any other question, I believe, that ever was debated in these walls. These efforts have not been unavailing. They have brought forth good fruits, although those fruits are not yet arrived at their full ma-

* Mr. Villiers Stuart.

turity. They have contributed greatly to turn public opinion in this country; and all that is now wanting, perhaps, is, first, a little more progress in this respect; and secondly, that it should become, as it will then become, a public opinion, not merely passive and speculative (at that stage we are already arrived), but active, pronounced, and decided. That great progress has already been made, no man who observes the signs of the times can doubt. Whatever may be the opinion of the less educated portion of the English community upon this subject, I do believe—or rather I *did* believe, until something which has fallen in the course of this discussion induced me to doubt the fact—that, with the enlightened and educated classes of the community, the question has altogether ceased to be one of religious difference, and so soon as the same feeling shall extend to the other classes of the community, it will be carried. Those who are the special guardians of the Established Church, and, let me add, its best-informed and liberal guardians, do not hesitate to declare, that the question is altogether one of security, and that if sufficient security be provided, exclusion becomes utterly indefensible. To their honour, it cannot be too generally known, that one of the brightest ornaments of the bench of bishops—the Bishop of Chester*—has declared, that the Catholic question ought to be looked at exclusively with reference to the security of the established church of England. That right reverend person has said—"If all can give equal security, let all be admitted;" and he concluded by expressing his conviction, "that if parties can be admitted to the enjoyment of state privileges, without danger, exclusion becomes utterly indefensible." Sir, I wish this opinion to go forth; I wish it to become general among that large class of the community, who have hitherto

* Dr. Blomfield, the present Bishop of London.

mixed up Catholic emancipation with less correct and less statesman-like considerations. When exclusion is strictly confined to a question of security, the good sense of the people will not be slow to discover, that the best of all securities is the absence of all those dangers which the present system engenders, foments, and calls into action. Once declare yourself ready to remove that cause of irritation—once lay the solid foundation of religious peace—and depend upon it, as on a late occasion, you will not find much difficulty in erecting upon it any other formal statutory securities and declarations which, from abundant caution, you may think it necessary to require.

But my honourable and learned friend, the Attorney General, calls on "the buds of genius" to take care that they see clearly that all the securities can be granted which are requisite, and may be considered adequate, before they proceed a step further in the way of concession. To those young and inexperienced members whom my honourable and learned friend thus addresses, I, as an old stager, say, that it is amongst the stalest of all stale arguments for a call to be made for securities, by those who have already formed the resolution never to concede the principle. It is for those who apprehend the danger, rather than for us, to point them out. At least they are bound to point out such causes of danger as may be intelligible to our understandings—at least they are bound to point out the mode in which those dangers are likely to come upon us, and to shew that they are sufficiently within the verge of possibility to awake the rational fears of men of ordinary nerves, and of common prudence and foresight, not mere phantoms of the nursery. This is the course which we who advocate the present question pursue. The evils, the dangers we point out are tangible, are imminent,

are undeniable, are, I may add, enough to disquiet the stoutest hearts among us.

Really, Sir, when we are talking of those securities and safeguards, which formed so large a portion of the speech of my honourable and learned friend, I do not know how to point them out, until I have a more distinct view of the difficulties and dangers in question. If my honourable and learned friend will not tell us the precise nature of the dangers to which he has alluded, at least let me be allowed to tell him what dangers are not to be apprehended. It is not the danger of entrusting the power of the sword, the command of your fleets and armies, to Catholic admirals and Catholic generals; for to such commands the Catholics are admissible. This is one of the boons which, it may be answered, you have conferred upon them by stealth. They slide into it unobserved and without commotion; and would to God that by another such act of stealth you could again do good, by giving them all that is now withheld; and if you could, they would equally slide into their new situations with as little agitation and as little alarm! It is not the power over the public revenue; for to all situations connected with its collection, management, and administration, the Catholic, I believe, is eligible. So that the two great powers, over the exercise of which a free state ought to be most jealous, and a protestant state most vigilant, for the due exercise of which it might reasonably look for guards and security, you see committed without reserve to Catholics equally with yourselves. Is it the danger of their intercourse with the See of Rome? Why, Sir, that intercourse is now carried on without the cognizance, or control, or check of the government. It passes through no authorized or responsible agent; and England is the only country in Europe, in which that unlimited, unautho-

rized communication exists; whilst the responsible servants of the state are precluded from observing towards the See of Rome even the courtesy of diplomatic etiquette. Is it from want of any participation, or control of the nomination of the Catholic bishops and other members of the Catholic hierarchy? Here again England is the only state in Europe, Catholic or Protestant, which exercises no such participation and control; and can any man believe that the principle of exclusion once removed, there would be any permanent difficulty in obtaining for the government of England the same satisfactory checks and powers, in all these respects, as now exist in Russia, in Protestant Prussia, in Protestant Hanover, in Protestant Wurtemburgh, in the Netherlands, in Baden, and in every other state in Europe.

Sir, checks and securities of this description, I have no wish whatever to oppose. I think them highly necessary. I think them highly desirable. I consider the want of them, the impossibility of introducing them, so long as the present state of things continues, one of the main objections to it. For, Sir, without going the length of my honourable friend, the member for Newport,* whose speech I heard, however, with great pleasure, not only on account of the sentiments which he avowed, but equally so on account of the good feelings which it evinced, I declare myself, as I always have on former occasions, no friend to the Catholic church. I am no advocate for its tenets, and am jealous of its spread, of its influence, of its ascendancy. These feelings may be in me the remains of early prejudices. But when I say they *may* be, I think they are not. It has been the endeavour of my life to bring all such prejudices to the test of rigid examination. I do not quarrel with what I would call the Christianity of the Catholic religion; but I look with no friendly feeling to the many

* Mr. Spencer Perceval.

contrivances and devices, not as I believe of the essence of that religion, or of any Christian faith, by which, in the dark ages of ignorance, superstition and despotism, the artful professors of that religion contrived to connect with it many highly dangerous and mischievous institutions. I will not enumerate those arts by which they addressed the hopes and fears of their bigotted followers; by which they watched and assailed the worst infirmities of the human mind, the most exciting, and the most depressing passions of human nature; and by which those passions have been so often directed to serve the most criminal views of ambition and avarice—sometimes in the priesthood, and sometimes in the secular tyrants, to whose iniquitous purposes they were made instrumental.

Sir, it is the history of these times that on this subject frightens us out of our propriety. But the question now is, Will the adoption of this motion diminish or increase the risk of that dangerous influence? On this part of the subject I would refer the House to the sentiments and views which were so beautifully and forcibly expressed by my noble friend * who closed the first night's debate. But, Sir, I go a step further than my noble friend. He told you, that this sinister influence, so powerful in former times, could not withstand the legitimate influence of a vigilant press—that, though backed by all the power of the court, by all the countenance of the King, and by all the Catholic feelings and Catholic recollections of France, it could not withstand a Press, certainly not the most free, or the most powerful by its diffusion among the mass of the community. In both these respects, the press of France is in its infancy.

But, Sir, my noble friend stopped here. I would add, to complete his argument, that what could not be done by a

* Lord Francis Leveson Gower.

court, by a king, in a Catholic country, may be effected in a Protestant state, in spite of a press more powerful, more free, by what?—by exclusion, by persecution. Sir, I do lay it down as a principle, that all that is faulty, and alarming, and dangerous in the practice of the Catholic religion, cannot exist in the times in which we live, in a country enjoying a free press, popular institutions, freedom of debate, and discussion, unless it be kept alive by persecution. This is the countervailing power to all these blessings,—this is the power which prevents education, which fosters superstition, which keeps alive the mischiefs of Catholicism in Ireland. It is the power which rivets the rich, and educated, and influential among the Catholics, to the priesthood,—it is the power by which a monstrous confederacy of dangerous democracy and bigotted superstition is likely to be found and knit together in that country. Take away from this power the aliment by which alone it is sustained, and its lingering decline may last for a few years; but soon it will be no more formidable than witchcraft, a danger once greatly dreaded by ignorance and superstition, and which would still have its believers and its victims, were we again to collapse into the same ignorance, and again to pass laws for the punishment of old women guilty of practising the black art.

I call upon you, therefore, in the name of the Irish people—in the name of the protestant church—in the name of the people of England, who are anxious to preserve peace, to let the Press, to let the Protestant faith, to let the free institutions of the country have fair play. Withdraw from the Catholics this weapon by which they have hitherto been made formidable—open your doors to a few Catholic gentry, who would obtain seats in this House, to the Catholic peers, who have inherited the honours of their ancestors. Do not so disparage yourselves—do not so disparage the guardians

of your church—do not think so ill of the good sense of the people of this country, as to believe it possible that the influence of these few members can prevail against the judgment, the loyalty, the intrepid attachment to Protestantism of a whole country. Of what are you afraid? Do you think that all the legitimate means of influencing the deliberations of a British House of Commons will be on the side of some Catholic representative? If, by some spell, we could be surprised at our posts, do you think that the other House, the Crown, and lastly, that sentinel which never wearies, and never sleeps upon his station—the Press of this country, would be all equally lulled and put off their guard, by the same fatal potion? Sir, the thing is impossible, and I will not further detain the House upon the subject. I only pray of them, by adopting this resolution, to take away from those they fear, the only weapon which can ever make them formidable

It has been urged, that if we admit Roman Catholics into this House we shall find them combining, as the Scotch members are said to have done. Now, Sir, I always understood, that all classes of society, agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial, were represented in this House, and we have heard of some interests occasionally combining against others; but that such a combination as that alluded to could take place, I positively deny. I am ready to concede, that, by the Act of Settlement, passed after the Revolution, it was expressly stipulated, that the Established Church should be strictly Protestant. God forbid that it should not! God forbid also that that law should not be permanent; and that we should not continue, not only Protestant, but Protestant according to the Church of England! The connection between Church and State existed long before the Revolution, and will, I hope and trust, long continue. But, am I to be told that the Act of Settlement was intended to be

permanent, without the power of making alteration or amendment? Am I to be told that all points and provisions of that act are to be continued in the same form in which they were enacted in 1688? Why, Sir, that very Act was seriously affected by the Union with Scotland; for by that union persons of a different religious persuasion from the Church of England were admitted into both Houses of Parliament; nay, persons who were looked upon by our Church as fanatics and rivals—I mean the Scotch Presbyterians. Why not call this an innovation of the law as well as the one now proposed? But there is another deviation from that act. By the Act of Settlement only hereditary peers, or peers by creation, were to sit in Parliament; and yet, upon the Union with Scotland, as well as that with Ireland, elective peers were allowed to be introduced. It is true that this was done; but still the principle of the law was adhered to, and neither Church nor State was in the slightest degree impaired by this partial deviation from the law itself. The honourable member for Yorkshire* made it a great objection to the Roman Catholic religion, that it admitted of no alteration; and observed, that it was now what it was known to be during all time. Now, when the honourable member said this, I think he would, had he looked around him, have found, from the declarations made at the time of Mr. Pitt, that the vicious doctrines attributed to that Church were disowned by the Roman Catholics of that day, and by those who assumed to be their leaders. When the honourable member said that that religion was always the same, did he mean to assert, that the religion which prevailed during the reign of the haughty Louis XIV, when he repealed the edict of Nantz, and sent his Dragonnades amongst his Protestant subjects, was the same with the religion now established in France, under the mild

* Mr. Duncombe.

and beneficent reign of Charles X? The religion is the same, but the times and the people have changed. The lights which have pervaded the whole world, have shed their influence upon the Catholic religion, and have made it different from what it formerly was.

Sir, there was one expression contained in the temperate, able, and eloquent, speech delivered on Friday, by my right honourable friend near me, in which I fully concur. My right honourable friend thought it better that a barrier should exist between Catholics and corporate offices, rather than that they should be rendered eligible without being elected. I admit that if such were to be the case, it would be a galling hardship; but, Sir, I think that if the legislature were once to decide that there was to be no religious difference as to eligibility to such offices, men of talent and character would not be repulsed on the ground of their being Roman Catholics. Roman Catholics are not now opposed when claiming admission to the other offices which are open to them; and if this be the case, why should the disqualification apply to this House or to the House of Peers? I always thought it one of the proudest boasts of an Englishman, that every office of the State was open to him, no matter how humble his origin. It is not for me to undervalue this great privilege, filling, as I do, however unworthily, a principal office in the State; but with what face could I turn to a Roman Catholic and say, "no matter what may be your talent—no matter what may be your qualifications for office—you are a Catholic, and cannot be admitted?" And if I were to say this, and were to be asked the reason why, the explanation must be of a most degrading nature, as I must say, "because you are not considered worthy of trust—because we cannot believe you upon your oath." And yet you call such a person to serve in your army, you call him to serve on juries, you call him to every duty which is dangerous or laborious; but all places

of benefit are to be denied to him. And why? Because you say he does not possess moral honesty, and cannot be trusted in a country, where he has the same interest as yourselves, and to which he is bound by the same ties of kindred and affection.

The public opinion in favour of the removal of Catholic disabilities has made great progress in this country of late years, and that progress is still going on. We ought not, however, to forget, that while good is thus speeding, the progress of evil is not less rapid in Ireland. In this race of contending principles, the evil will overcome the good, unless its retardation shall be effected by those measures which are now recommended for the tranquillization of Ireland. When I hear it suggested, that if it shall become necessary, tranquillity may be restored to Ireland by force, I beseech the House to recollect, that if the Government should ever be engaged in a struggle with Ireland, it would not merely be a contest with the people of that country, but with the common feeling and the opinions of the educated and better part of the population of this country. Under such circumstances, and where so many high authorities concur in the views which I take of this subject, and who doubt the wisdom, to say the least of it, of the restrictions which now exist—it would surely be following the path of prudence, for those who are opposed to that view to distrust the conclusions they have come to. They will display the best feeling, and act with the most unquestionable prudence, by yielding with a good grace, and granting now that which they will not be able much longer to withhold.

My honourable and learned friend, the Attorney-General, says, that it would be useless to go into a Committee now, seeing that the House has gone into committees before, without being able to find any satisfactory securities; but I beg to dif-

fer from this statement. It may be true that we could not find such securities as would satisfy my honourable and learned friend, because, perhaps, none can be devised with which he will be satisfied; but, as far as the sense of the House is concerned, those securities have been found. The bill of 1813 grew out of a motion exactly the same as that now before the House; and in that bill securities were proposed, although they were, unfortunately, not carried into effect. If, therefore, my honourable and learned friend thinks securities necessary, it is clearly not impossible that they may be had.

My honourable and learned friend has recommended the journals of the House to the perusal of the younger members. I do not join in that recommendation, but I advise my honourable and learned friend to read the two volumes now lying on the table. He will there find that the motion of 1822 was not for a committee, but for leave to bring in a bill. I am, however, inclined to prefer a committee, because, in such committee, any proposition that may be made can be more conveniently considered. I am convinced that the longer the remedy proposed is delayed, the greater will be the growth of the mischief to which it is intended to be applied. I should be sorry to see a recurrence of events, such as took place during the last war. We have already made many concessions, and some of them too much in the presence of a foreign power, and having too much the appearance of a parley with an armed population. Let us make this, the most important of all our concessions, an act of grace as it is an act of justice. It will be better to give willingly and while we can, that which may one day be extorted from us.

The House divided: For Sir Francis Burdett's motion, 272. Against it, 266. Majority, in favour of the motion, 6.

PROVISION FOR THE FAMILY OF MR. CANNING.

May 13.

The House resolved itself into a committee on the Officers' Pensions Bill, in which the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, that the sum of 3,000*l.* a year should be settled on one of the branches of Mr. Canning's family, and be vested in trustees for the use of his family. After the motion had been supported by Lord Morpeth, Sir Robert Wilson, Lord George Bentinck, and opposed by Lord Althorp, Sir M. W. Ridley, Mr. Hume, and Mr. Bankes,

Mr. Secretary Huskisson said, that having been one of the nearest and dearest friends of the late Mr. Canning, and having been connected with him by the closest ties of personal attachment, throughout rather a long political life, he felt perfectly sensible, before he came down to the House, that, were he to appear prominent in this debate, he should be liable to the reflection of being actuated by that bias which this connection would naturally suggest. He had, therefore, been anxious not to say one word upon the subject before the House. But, after the speech of his honourable friend* who had spoken last, and spoken in such a manner of his lamented friend—[here Mr. Huskisson laboured under strong emotion, and was loudly cheered during a momentary pause]—he could not sit silent; and with all these disadvantages pressing around him, he could not refrain from giving vent to the feelings which agitated his bosom.

His honourable friend had laid great stress upon what he was pleased to call this mischievous precedent, and had asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether he wished to establish such an example as this grant would afford? Now, his right honourable friend meant, on this occasion,

* Mr. Bankes.

to establish no precedent; and he must say, that he looked with some surprise at the attempt which was made to dwell upon this proposition, as one which constituted a serious precedent. What was the fact? Because the Parliament had, on a former occasion, taken away from the Crown certain offices, which having little duties, or being sinecures, were no longer deemed desirable to be upheld, but which had been previously bestowed as a reward for eminent services, and vested this power in the Crown by way of indemnity, they were to be told that they were creating a new office, and proposing an extravagant waste of the public money. He remembered that, when the new arrangement was made, by which the Crown surrendered its prerogative of rewarding by offices of this description, it was asked, would they limit the Crown by the new act, and shut it out from the means of rewarding able and faithful services? To this it was at the time answered—he forgot whether it was by his honourable friend himself—that, whenever a special case arose, it could only be necessary to make application to Parliament, where a desire would always be found to do justice to eminent services performed for the state. In this spirit, on this occasion, ministers had come to Parliament. And, how were they met? Not by a fulfilment of the former pledge; but by an exclamation—"You are going to create a most dangerous precedent." The answer was, they were not going to create any such evil, but were merely calling upon Parliament to fulfil its own expressed anticipation of claims, for the performance of meritorious services to the state. The Crown had, upon conditions, surrendered that which it need not have otherwise conceded; and it was hard to say, when ministers now came forward in the full spirit of the contract, that they were attempting to introduce a most dangerous precedent. What had the dead-weight act to do with this discussion, seeing that the real object was

to give efficacy to an act which was entirely within the spirit of his honourable friend's own principle of economy? The arrangement which pervaded the act given to the Crown, when the sinecure offices were abolished, was simply this:—the Crown was empowered to grant six pensions, not exceeding, in the aggregate, 40,000*l.* a-year, to ministers who had performed eminent public services, according to their different stations and degrees. If the Crown were in course of paying the whole of this sum (which was not the case), the public would have no right to complain, according to the strist terms of the agreement; for it was a compensation given by Parliament, in exchange for the surrender of a much larger and more valuable amount of patronage. The only limits were six offices, and 40,000*l.*

What was the present proposition? To grant one of these for life to the son of Mr. Canning, in consideration of those services for which his father could, unfortunately, no longer receive reward in his own person. This entailed no increase upon the principle of the fund: it gave one claimant for another; it substituted one life for that which had been withdrawn. And that act, be it remembered, was passed in times of infinitely greater pressure upon the finances of the country, than could now be said to exist. It was passed, likewise, while a committee of finance was sitting, and with a careful and deliberate attention to public economy.

His honourable friend had said, that Mr. Canning had optionally given up the lucrative situation in India, which had been conferred upon him when his Majesty called him to a high and honourable situation in his councils at home, and must therefore have considered what he had received, as a full equivalent for that which he had surrendered—that, in fact, he had heartily exchanged the foreign service for the more glorious opening to his ambition at

home. Now, upon the sense entertained by Mr. Canning upon what his honourable friend had been pleased to call his choice, he begged to be heard for one moment. He regretted to be obliged to make reference, on such an occasion, to information derived from the privacy of confidential intercourse. He would however state, upon his own personal credit,—he would declare, upon his own reputation as a man, in that house,—that whatever were the feelings of others, who were justly near and dear to Mr. Canning, it had for years been his own warm and anxious wish—owing to circumstances that were likely to press upon the acute and sensitive mind of such a man—to be placed in some public situation, however it might sacrifice or compromise the fair and legitimate scope of his ambition, which, while it enabled him to perform adequate public services, would enable him also to place upon a better footing his wife's private fortune, which he had decreased, and the inheritance of his children, which he had impaired. He would not go so far as to say that this was a prospect fixed upon Mr. Canning's mind, or an object that he was bent upon pursuing, for it was difficult to trace the springs of so susceptible a temperament; but under the circumstances, it was quite natural, considering his means and his family, that while he honourably sought a situation to render service to his country, he should not be unmindful of the means of repairing the fortune of his family, which he had diminished while in the service of that country.

His honourable friend seemed to think, that in these conflicts between the acceptance of particular offices, and the performance of different duties, the decisions were perfectly optional. This was an egregious mistake, and a wrong view of the springs of human action. It was not the principle which governed public men in this country—he hoped and believed not. The principle of Mr. Canning was, when

His Majesty had formally called upon him to forego one situation and fill another,—not to look to the right or to the left,—not to consider emolument, but public duty, and to obey the commands of his Sovereign, if there was nothing in the nature of the proposition submitted to him incompatible with his public principles and personal honour. He had in his possession a letter written by Mr. Canning, a very few months after the time when he had cheerfully relinquished the golden prospects of the East, and when, as his honourable friend seemed to think, he was indulging the gratification of his splendid ambition, in which, speaking of the toils, and anxieties, and pains of his official situation, he used these expressive words—"Would to God that I were now on board the 'Jupiter!'"—the name of the ship destined for his voyage to India. So much, therefore, for his lamented friend's gratifying option! So much for the pleasures and profits of office, which he was supposed to have enjoyed with so much satisfaction!

He entirely concurred in the expression of his honourable friend's opinion upon the necessity of enforcing a principle of economy; but if he was not mistaken, his honourable friend had more than once admitted, that the great offices of the state were not in this country overpaid. For himself, he had indeed always objected to having their salaries or emoluments increased, and had always thought it would be a most unwise policy, not with regard to economy alone, to raise the stipends of the high officers of state. His reason for so thinking had been, because in a country like this, possessed of a wealthy aristocracy and of a number of commoners of large fortune, talents well suited to the service of the state must often be found, to whom the salary of office would be no object. Such a feeling ought, on principle, to be cultivated; while at the same time, the

Crown should not be prevented from looking elsewhere for aid if necessary,—should not be deprived of calling into its service those talents which might be found placed in less fortunate circumstances in the community. He should be sorry to see the Crown restricted in the privilege of benefiting by the talents of any of these classes, whether by being excluded from the choice of servants among the less wealthy ranks, or—which he would be still more sorry for—by being tied down to the aristocracy, to the exclusion of whatever abilities might offer themselves in other quarters. His conclusion therefore was, that it was a wise principle to keep the salaries of high and efficient offices at a comparative low rate; and whenever great services had been received, and want of adequate means the result to the individual or his family, to come down to Parliament, once, perhaps, in a quarter of a century, to make an appeal for the payment of the debts of some minister like Mr. Pitt, or some provision for the family of such a man as Mr. Canning. This was an infinitely more economical course, than any project for raising the salaries of officers of state, which would entail a permanent and fixed expense to the nation. Instances would often occur when, as at present in the case of the Minister for Foreign Affairs,* or in that of the late Secretary of State for the Home Department,† salary would be nothing. These distinguished persons having always large establishments, would have to incur, in consequence of official station, little or no additional expenditure. Many persons who had filled office received more than their official salary as the reward for their services. Lord Grenville, for instance, had received other rewards besides the salary attached to the office, which he had filled with so much honour to himself, and so much advantage to the country. He mentioned this, for the purpose of shewing

*The Earl of Dudley. † The Marquis of Lansdowne.

that his honourable friend was not borne out in his argument on that point, by a reference to facts. The better and more economical course would be, not to augment salaries, but to leave the door open for any special case like the present, which Parliament might think fit to consider.

Another charge of his honourable friend was, that Mr. Canning had expended a large sum of the public money, for fitting up his private residence. Now he did not know the amount laid out upon the office in Downing-street; but he knew that, with the extension of the business of the Foreign Office, it had become necessary to enlarge the building; and when the expediency and value of personal residence was evident, and when it was considered that, in that neighbourhood it was not easy to obtain a house, with suitable accommodation for maintaining the scale of hospitality which the office required, he thought it not too much, that some expense should be incurred to secure such a public object; but he must repeat, that that expense could not have amounted to any thing like the sum mentioned by his honourable friend, in the way in which he had put it.

His honourable friend had said that, instead of the country being a debtor to Mr. Canning for his services, she was his creditor on account of the expenditure of which he had been the cause, and which had taken place in the foreign department while he was in office; and his honourable friend had told them to look to Portugal, to Greece, and to the passage of the Pruth by the Russians. Now, every honourable member must see the unfairness,—for he could not call it by a milder name,— of discussing such questions on the present occasion. Standing there as a minister of the Crown, and a colleague of the late Mr. Canning, willing as he was to encounter all the responsibility of those measures upon which his honourable friend opposite had passed such a sweeping condemnation, and

ready as he was, on the fit occasion, to enter upon the defence of those measures, he would confess he felt, and sure he was it was a feeling in which the House participated, that it was exceedingly unfair to introduce such a subject into this discussion. This much he would say to his honourable friend,—that the expedition to Portugal was sent out with the concurrence of every Minister who then sat in the Cabinet, and that the measure had been approved of in another House, by the illustrious Duke who now presided over his Majesty's Councils He would say more,—that that expedition was sent out to defend the oldest ally of this country against foreign machinations and aggression,—that that was the sole, entire, and definite purpose for which it was sent there; and that it had completely accomplished that purpose. The independence of Portugal had been preserved. She had been secured against foreign invasion, and those dangers had been dissipated, against which they had been called upon, by the faith of treaties and by the policy of this country, to provide. Nevertheless, his honourable friend would render Mr. Canning's memory responsible for the expenses of this expedition—he would charge the purse of his family, if he could—and he would, if it were in his power, call upon them to pay for that expedition with their last shilling. Nay, his honourable friend would go still further, and charge upon the memory of Mr. Canning that folly and infatuation which evil counsels had produced, in the instance of the Prince Regent of Portugal.

But the Russians, forsooth, had passed the Pruth! and, according to his honourable friend, it was quite just that Mr. Canning should be held responsible for that likewise. The present was not the time to discuss the questions growing out of the present state of things in the east of Europe; but he did not anticipate any such direful consequences to

this country from them, as his honourable friend seemed to apprehend. Nevertheless, let the consequences be what they might, he would tell his honourable friend, that but for the policy of Mr. Canning, the passage of the Pruth would have been effected long since, and under circumstances by no means so favourable to this country, as those under which it had now occurred.

His honourable friend had alluded to the force in the Mediterranean, and had laid the expenditure and the occurrences there at the door of Mr. Canning. Did his honourable friend never hear that the Mediterranean had been infested by numerous pirates?—that the commerce of all nations, and particularly British commerce, had suffered severe losses in consequence of their depredations? It was to put down that system of piracy that the force had been sent out to the Mediterranean; and no blame could attach to his lamented friend, or to those who concurred with him in the policy of sending out that force, if a shock had afterwards taken place, which had never been anticipated, as one of the consequences of those instructions which Mr. Canning, in the discharge of his duty to the country and the Crown, had prepared.

The next point to which his honourable friend had adverted, was one upon which it was desirable that no discussion should have been provoked. His noble friend, who had addressed the House with so much eloquence and feeling, had adverted to the delay which had taken place in bringing forward this proposition. Now, he could assert, that there did not exist in the late Administration, any indisposition to consider the claims of the family of Mr. Canning; and he could positively say, that in the present Administration there prevailed one unanimous concurrence in the present proposition, and that the delay which had taken place was not to be attributed to any desire on their

part to defeat the object of the proposition. All personal feelings had been laid aside, when this question came to be considered by them. All angry passions were for the time forgotten, and they approached the consideration of the question as public men, looking only to the circumstances which had reference to the public services of the man, and the loss which his family had sustained by his death. In this they imitated the great example of Mr. Fox, who at a period when the finances of the country were greatly embarrassed, notwithstanding the many angry and violent encounters which had taken place between them in Parliament, was amongst the foremost to support the bill for the payment of the debts of Mr. Pitt, and, with the characteristic virtue of great men, laid aside all recollections of the differences which had prevailed between him and his lost rival.

He felt that he had already trespassed too long on the attention of the House. He would, however, say this of Mr. Canning,—that, during the course of a long parliamentary life, he had known all the great men who, for the last twenty-five years, had served their country, and that he never knew one of them who had exceeded Mr. Canning in the exclusion of every thing of self, when concerned in the discharge of public duties. In his anxiety to discharge those duties, he was regardless of all other considerations. His desire for power arose from his love of fame; and his constant exertions, while in power, were directed to the advancement of the fame of his country. Animated with these feelings, he had lighted up that flame in the Peninsula which had blazed throughout Europe, and had at last restored the peace of the continent. The same feelings influenced him in the latter part of his career—the same desire still animated his breast, to promote the good and to advance the greatness of his country. The anxiety which he

exhibited, and the incessant exertions which he devoted to the accomplishment of that great object, destroyed a frame which had been otherwise robust, and caused his premature decease—too soon, alas! for his country, though not for his own fame. He last saw his lamented friend in the month of July. His health was then drooping—his strength was gone, and his frame was fast sinking to decay; but his spirit was still as young as ever, and his enthusiasm in the cause of his country knew no bounds. If his lamented friend had errors, they were the errors of a great mind. In none of the illustrious men who had yielded themselves up to the calls of public duty, had he seen the same devotedness of soul to the cause of the country, which had been uniformly exhibited by Mr. Canning, with the exception of Nelson, and, as their feelings were similar, so their fate was the same; for both had fallen in the service of their country. If departed spirits retained the feelings which animated them in their earthly sojourn, sure he was that those kindred spirits were still pervaded with the desire for England's fame and England's greatness. That was the all-pervading ambition which influenced the public conduct of Mr. Canning, and it was on that account that he called on the House to adopt the present motion. His honourable friend opposite had calculated what he reckoned Mr. Canning to have cost the country, and had estimated it at sixty thousand pounds. No doubt his honourable friend had discharged what he conceived to be a public duty, in opposing this proposal; but gladly would the family of Mr. Canning relinquish more than sixty thousand pounds, if they could have restored to them that parent who had fallen a sacrifice to his devotion to his country.

The committee divided: For the motion, 161. Against it, 54.

EAST RETFORD DISFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

May 19.

The House being in a committee on the Bill for disfranchising East Retford, and transferring the franchise to Birmingham, Mr. Nicholson Calvert moved an amendment to the preamble, that it should be transferred to the hundred of Bassetlaw. Upon which, Lord Sandon, referring to the fate of the Penryn Disfranchisement Bill in the Lords, reminded Mr. Huskisson of his declaration, that 'if there was only one case of delinquency before the House, he should recommend and support the transfer of the franchise to some great commercial town,' and claimed his vote in favour of the present bill.

Mr. Secretary HUSKISSON said, that his noble friend was not incorrect, as to what had fallen from him on a former occasion; but when he said, that if they adopted the proposition of the honourable member for Hertfordshire they would create a precedent for future occasions, he could not admit the principle, that the franchise should always in future be transferred to a great town whenever any borough might be disfranchised. The House might make a bad selection; and as what his right honourable friend near him had said, related only to a choice between two towns, so his opinion had been, that it would be better to extend the franchise to the neighbourhood of the town which had formerly enjoyed it, rather than to a distant part of the kingdom. Now, as to the present course, it should be recollected, that when the House first took upon itself to punish for corruption, it did not disfranchise any borough, but considered that a corrective was applied by throwing the liberty open to the vicinage. This had been done in the cases of Shoreham, Aylesbury, and other places; and the argument in favour of that course was strengthened, when there were numbers in any place, who had not vitiated their franchise by using it for corrupt purposes. In such cases, Parliament had no right to take away the franchise, and thus punish

innocent persons for guilt incurred by others. The proposition, however, of the honourable member for Hertfordshire, was not to infuse fresh blood into the borough, by letting in the freeholders of the vicinage, but to deal with East Retford as they had done with Grampound; and then, by giving the franchise to the neighbourhood, to create a new representation. Under these circumstances, he felt great difficulty, and wished to postpone the decision, until the fate of the other bill which had been sent up to the Lords could be known.

The committee divided: For the amendment, 146. Against it, 128. Upon this occasion, Mr. Huskisson voted with the minority.

EAST RETFORD DISFRANCHISEMENT BILL— MR. HUSKISSON'S STATEMENT, RESPECTING HIS REMOVAL FROM OFFICE.

June 2.

Mr. Tennyson having moved the order of the day, for going into a committee on this bill,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and said:—Sir, the circumstances under which I offer myself to your notice will, I trust, bespeak for me—that, of which I shall stand so much in need—the patient indulgence of this House, without my making any elaborate appeal to their good feelings.

Notwithstanding the example of modern times, more especially the precedents of the last session,—notwithstanding the appeal just made to me by the honourable member who has moved the order of the day,—I, for one, am not prepared to subscribe to the doctrine, that a minister of the Crown, on quitting his Majesty's service, is necessarily called upon to give an account, either to Parliament or to

he country, of the grounds on which he has ceased to hold office. For all that he may have done, for any thing which the may have omitted to do, in his official capacity, he is responsible: and I trust that I am not less prepared than any of my predecessors to answer any questions, or to render a full and explicit account, in these respects.

But while I do not acknowledge the abstract obligation of explaining why I am no longer in office, I am willing to admit to the honourable member for Blechingly, that there are peculiar circumstances in the present instance which, in justice to the country, and in justice to myself as a public character, render such explanation necessary and expedient.

When my right honourable friend* last year retired from the post which he occupied, he found it necessary to explain the motives which had led him, voluntarily though reluctantly, to resign a situation in which he had done such worthy service to the country. I have to state, not the motives which influenced me in relinquishing office, but the circumstances which have caused my removal from it. Of the motives for that removal I can explain nothing. They belong to others; and all which I will venture to say respecting them is, that I have no doubt they were suggested by what appeared a sense of public duty. But were I to be silent on the events in question,—were I to allow it to remain uncontradicted that I had lightly, inconsiderately, and upon what I must say I cannot but regard as, in itself, a comparatively trivial occasion, sent in my resignation, I should justly, I think, in public opinion, be held responsible for an improper sense of the high trust confided to me, and for a disregard of the duty which I owe to my sovereign; for interrupting at a most important period of the session the course of public business, both in and out of Parliament; for having thrown the Government and the country into a state of

* Mr. Secretary Peel.

temporary embarrassment, suspending not only the ordinary march of affairs, but at a most difficult and critical conjuncture, involving in the same suspense our relations with our allies, and the duties which we had to perform, as well towards them, as for the maintenance of harmony and good understanding amongst the powers of Europe. Under such circumstances, to have resigned, as it is said I have resigned, or to be removed, as I contend, I have been removed, without some sufficient and adequate cause, is that mystery which it is proper I should endeavour to explain.

The House will recollect that we have had before us, in this session, two bills for disfranchising boroughs accused of corruption; and that, at an early period of the session, these bills were both upon our table, at the same time. One of the bills affected the elective franchise of Penryn, and it was proposed to transfer that franchise to Manchester. The other, as proposed by the honourable member for Blechingly, had for its object the transference of the elective franchise from East Retford to Birmingham. On the 21st of March, a long and able discussion took place upon the latter proposal. In the course of that debate, my right honourable friend stated in substance, that, as there were two bills before the House, he should propose, in the case of one (that of Penryn), to make the transfer to Manchester; —in the other, to open the borough to the hundred. My right honourable friend argued on the expediency of pursuing this course, much at length and with his usual ability. He was followed by several gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, who took a different view from him, and urged that in both cases the elective franchise should be transferred from the corrupt boroughs to great commercial towns. I came down to the House on that evening without any intention of taking part in the discussion. No other person, however, but my right honourable friend having

addressed the House from the bench on which he now sits, I rose very late in the debate, and, it would appear that, in the course of the observations which fell from me, I made use of the following expressions: "Did the present case (East Retford) stand alone, I certainly should recommend and support the measure of transferring the franchise to some great commercial town." I do assure the House and my right honourable friend, that, in making this declaration, I did not, at the time, consider myself as outstepping the fair spirit of the line of argument, which he himself had adopted. I wish to state this fairly; because, in the situation in which I stand it is my duty to show that I did not do what would in me have been highly improper, namely, that I did not go further than what I distinctly understood to be the view of my right honourable friend; and I have reason to know that there were many other members of this House who entertained the same opinion of what had fallen from my right honourable friend as myself. After the explanation which I heard from him in a subsequent debate, I am ready to admit, in equal sincerity, that this was by no means a necessary inference, and that I was committing myself beyond the point to which my right honourable friend had committed himself.

The Penryn bill, transferring the franchise to Manchester, passed this House on the 1st of April, and no further proceeding was had on the East Retford bill till the 19th of May. I understand, I do not know how correctly, the cause of this delay to have been, that my right honourable friend himself suggested to the honourable member who had charge of this bill, to make it what he called a "waiting bill," depending upon the fate of the other in the House of Lords.

On the 19th of May, it was proposed to take a further proceeding in the case of East Retford, and it was then

notorious—as I understood in the course of the debate—to every member of this House, that the Penryn bill was in such a state in the House of Lords, as to make it probable, nay, I may say certain, that the elective franchise would either be given to the hundred, or that the bill would be rejected altogether.

I am not at liberty, Sir, to disclose any thing which may have passed elsewhere; but this much I may say without any breach of confidence, and for the accuracy of it, if necessary, I can appeal to my noble friend the late Secretary at War, that my right honourable friend came down to the House on the 19th of May quite aware of the extent to which I was committed by my declaration, already referred to, of the 21st of March, and that all my colleagues knew that, in former cases of bills of disfranchisement, the members of the King's Government had felt themselves at liberty to entertain different opinions, and to take different parts, in the progress of those bills through Parliament. On this topic I can go no further.

In the debate, on the 19th of May, an amendment to the preamble of the bill was moved by the honourable member for the county of Hertford, not simply to extend, according to precedent, the franchise of East Retford to the freeholders of the hundred, but which went the length of establishing an entirely new right of election. This right depended upon the voter being rated to the amount of 20*l.* a year—it entirely took away the corporate rights of East Retford; and while it provided that the mayor should be the returning officer, it provided also that no man should be mayor who was not rated to the annual amount of 40*l.* a year. I stated at the time as I now repeat, that this proposition was a complete anomaly and novelty in the mode in which Parliament had hitherto dealt with the rights of

electors, and I do not believe that my honourable friend was prepared then, or that he is prepared now, to show how his machinery would have worked, and how many inhabitants of East Retford would have possessed the right of voting under this new regulation. How the returning officer (whether mayor or bailliff) was to be elected, or how it was to be ascertained whether he was, or was not, rated at 40*l.* a year, I know not. The whole proposition presented so many anomalies, and was so entirely unprecedented, it was so extraordinary in itself, that, offered, as it was, to the House without notice or preliminary information, it seemed to me in every respect objectionable. Instead of remedying the corruption of the borough, it erected one of the hundreds of Nottinghamshire into a new little county, and giving to it rights such as exist no where else, annihilated the franchise of the corporation.

My right honourable friend confined himself to noticing the difference between this proposition and the mere transfer of the franchise to the hundred. He argued in favour of the hundred, and vindicated his own consistency in taking that course. He showed, I think successfully, that he had himself in the former debate taken a line which left him free to adopt the suggestion of the honourable member for Hertfordshire—barring the anomaly which it proposed to introduce. But it must be clear to every body, that, however firm my right honourable friend might stand upon his own ground, it was one upon which there was no possible footing for me. The more he fortified his own defence, the more he left me without one—nay the greater the tenacity of his own successful resistance, the more it seemed to invite an attack (though certainly most unintentionally) upon my defenceless position. Late in the evening it was made accordingly—made by a noble friend of mine,* and

* Lord Sandon.

made, I am quite sure, without the smallest particle of personal or political hostility towards myself. I use his own expression—"I claim the vote of the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department. I claim it on the very grounds on which his right honourable colleague has rested the defence of his own consistency." When my vote was thus claimed, when I was thus specially summoned, to redeem a positive pledge, publicly given, had I any alternative? I rose immediately after my noble friend to acknowledge the pledge. — And here my right honourable friend will allow me to remind him that, as I rose, he said to me, "be sure you mark the difference between what I said, in a former debate, and your declaration." Independently of the wish thus specifically expressed, it was a duty which I owed to my right honourable friend to endeavour to do so. But exactly in proportion that I dwelt upon that difference, did I unavoidably point to the different conclusions to which it must necessarily lead us. For the sake of avoiding the inconvenience, and pain to me, of that apparent difference, I adverted to the anomalous novelty of the proposal brought forward by the member for the county of Hertford, and on that ground I proposed to adjourn coming to any vote till after the holidays. Sir, I avow the motive of my proposal, and my right honourable friends on the Treasury Bench know very well to what I allude, when I say that had an adjournment been permitted, any future difference, which might have been manifested in the progress of the bill, would have been immaterial. Upon sitting down I pressed upon my right honourable friend the expediency of supporting the adjournment. He replied to me, that he must persevere in the course which he had taken that evening. It has been since suggested to me by persons, perhaps, of more discretion than myself, that I might have sheltered my consistency in voting with my

right honourable friend, under the excuse that the fate of the Penryn Bill was not formally known to the House of Commons. Sir, I thought at the time—I still think—that to have done so would have been a paltry subterfuge. Every gentleman who had spoken in the debate—not excepting my right honourable friend himself—had assumed—what indeed was a matter of incontrovertible notoriety,—that the Penryn Bill would be amended, either by transfering the franchise to the hundred—or that it would be rejected altogether. In the former alternative my right honourable friend had indeed a waiting case—and, in that alternative, he would have had to revert to the substitution of a town instead of the hundred of Bassetlaw. But, in either alternative, I was bound to give my vote for a town. The division took place soon after; the House adjourned, and I went home, not, however, without observing the intelligible looks of some, and hearing the audible whisperings of others.—Whether from these omens I magnified to myself the impression, which the vote might make in other quarters next morning, I will not pretend to determine.

Perhaps, but for some such excitement, easily conceived by those who can make allowance for the state of fatigue both of body and mind, in which a man, not in strong health, finds himself after a continuance of fifteen or sixteen hours of incessant attention to business, I should have postponed, till after a night's rest, making any communication to the noble Duke at the head of the government. A communication to the same effect I am bound, however, to state that, as a point of honour and courtesy, I should certainly have made. It might have been, I will freely admit it—more cautiously worded than one which was written hastily, and, perhaps, under a too sensitive feeling, but my meaning must have been the same. That meaning was simply this—that having voted on the oppo-

site side of the House from my right honourable friend, (however driven to do so by the force of circumstances, and however unimportant, in my view, the occasion) I was bound to offer to pay the price of that vote, and to relieve the head of the government, in forming his own judgment, from any delicacy which he might feel towards me personally.

Under these impressions, I wrote the letter which I am desirous of reading to the House. And here I may be allowed to say, that I feel considerable difficulty how to proceed; in what way to avoid this difficulty has occupied much of my thoughts in the course of this morning. On the one hand, if I state the substance and import of the correspondence which has taken place, I am sensible that I may omit something important, and may expose myself to the suspicion that I have not given a faithful and exact representation:—on the other hand, I know how irksome, and how little acceptable to the House will be a full detail of the correspondence. But I also know that, on similar occasions, letters of the kind have been read, and I shall, with the permission of the House, follow that example. I have already stated the circumstances in which I was placed; and I will only add, that, I thought I was discharging a duty imposed upon me by a point of honour. I am free to admit, that if the letter which I am about to read had been postponed for a few hours, it would have expressed more clearly and explicitly, what it was intended to convey. It was marked "private and confidential"—was dated at two o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, May 20th, and was in the following terms:—

"Downing Street, Tuesday Morning, 2 A.M. 20th May.

"My dear Duke,—After the vote which, in regard to my own consistency and personal character, I have found myself, from the course

of this evening's debate, compelled to give on the East Retford question, I owe it to you as the head of the administration, and to Mr. Peel as the leader of the House of Commons, to lose no time in affording you an opportunity of placing my office in other hands, as the only means in my power of preventing the injury to the King's service, which may ensue from the appearance of disunion in his Majesty's councils, however unfounded in reality, or however unimportant in itself, the question which has given rise to that appearance.

"Regretting the necessity of troubling you with this communication, believe me, my dear duke, ever truly your's,

"W. Huskisson."

This letter I marked "private and confidential," both inside and upon the cover. I then sent it so marked, and sealed, in a cabinet box to Apsley-house. It will be evident, therefore, that I took all possible precaution to confine my communication to the quarter for which it was intended; and I really must say, that if a member of government cannot have intercourse with the head of the administration, either in confidential conversation, or—in what must often be the unavoidable substitute for it—an unreserved communication in writing—without minutely scrutinizing, and cautiously weighing the possible interpretation of every word he may use in such a private and confidential manner, all that has recently occurred cannot surprise any one.

I may here be permitted to say, that, in the course of a long political life, it has once before happened to me to be placed in a similar situation. In the month of May, 1822, Lord Londonderry, then the leading minister in this House, moved the following resolution—a resolution, be it remembered, of which he was himself the author—"That his Majesty be enabled to direct Exchequer bills, to an amount not exceeding one million, to be issued to Commissioners in Great Britain, to be by them advanced, under certain regulations and restrictions, whenever the average price of

wheat shall be under 60*s.* per quarter, upon such corn, the growth of the United Kingdom, as shall be deposited in fit and proper warehouses."

Upon that occasion, from circumstances which I need not now detail, but connected with the share which I had had in the corn question, and with the preparing of the report of the committee of the preceding year, I did oppose the resolution of the noble marquis, although he had brought it forward as a measure of government; and the sense of the House was so strongly against it, that it was abandoned. I went the next morning to the Earl of Liverpool, and I did then what I have done on the recent occasion, but without a similar result. I thought myself bound in honour to take that course then; and, for the same reason, I took it now.

However little I can admit that this letter, so marked "private and confidential," and written under the circumstances before described, could fairly be considered to convey any other meaning than that which I intended, I am far from maintaining (it is not necessary for me to maintain,) that it could not bear a different construction. It appears to have been received by the noble Duke about ten o'clock on Tuesday morning. He states, that it surprised him, and I must suppose that he was the more surprised as my letter only referred to what had passed in the House of Commons the night before, without entering into detail or explanation of any sort. Notwithstanding this surprise—notwithstanding the absence of all explanation—notwithstanding the superscription, "private and confidential"—without seeking for explanation—without communication of any sort with me—without allowing himself time to consider even whether his own construction of this letter was not open to doubt—the noble Duke hurried away to St. James's, and laid that which, in the abandonment of con-

fidence, had been intended only as an act of delicacy towards himself, at the foot of the throne, advising his Majesty, that it was an act of positive and formal resignation.

Being at my office between one and two o'clock—and here it is material to note the hours—my noble friend, the late Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, came to me upon public business of great importance connected with his own department. We discussed it together. At the close of that discussion something which incidentally dropped from my noble friend, led me to tell him of what I called, in describing it, a little act of unavoidable insubordination, and to say, trifling as it is, political punctilio requires that I should offer to pay the price of it. A few minutes after this conversation, the noble Earl being still with me, I received the following letter from the noble Duke:—

(Private.)

"London, May 20th, 1828.

"My dear Huskisson;—Your letter of two this morning, which I received at ten, has surprised me much, and has given me great concern. I have considered it my duty to lay it before the King. Ever your's, most sincerely,

"WELLINGTON."

"The Rt. Hon. W. Huskisson."

I immediately put the letter into the hands of my noble friend. He had scarcely read it, before he said, "the Duke has entirely mistaken your meaning, I will go instantly and explain the mistake, and the thing will be at once set right." He did so without a moment's delay. In a few minutes he returned to me to say, "I have not met with the success which I anticipated, the Duke will not allow that there is any mistake, and persists in considering your letter as a positive resignation, when it was natural to expect that he would be glad to find that he was altogether

under a misconception. He does not seem to understand what passed last night." Upon hearing this, I sent to Lord Palmerston, and requested of him to wait upon the Duke, and explain the course of the transaction. He did so, and, returning to me about five o'clock, told me that the Duke continued to adhere to the same construction. I no sooner found that this was the case, than I wrote again to the noble Duke the letter which I will now read.

(Private.)

"Downing Street, 20th May, ½ P. M. 1828.

"My dear Duke;—Having understood from Lord Dudley and Lord Palmerston, that you had laid my letter of last night before the King under a different impression from that which it was intended to convey, I feel it due both to you and to myself to say, that my object in writing that letter was, not to express any intentions of my own, but to relieve you from any delicacy which you might feel towards me, if you should think that the interests of his Majesty's service would be prejudiced by my remaining in office, after giving a vote, in respect to which, from the turn which the latter part of the debate had taken, a sense of personal honour left me no alternative. Believe me, my dear Duke, your's very sincerely,

"W. HUSKISSON."

To this I received the following answer, dated the same evening, but which did not reach me till the next morning:—

(Private.)

"London, May 20th, 1828.

"My dear Huskisson;—I have received your letter of this evening. I certainly did not understand your letter of two o'clock this morning, as offering me any option; nor do I understand the one of this evening as leaving me any, except that of submitting myself and his Majesty's government to the necessity of soliciting you to remain in your office, or of incurring the loss of your valuable assistance to his Majesty's service.

"However sensible I may be of this loss, I am convinced that, in these times, any loss is better than that of character, which is the foundation of public confidence.

"In this view of the case, I have put out of it altogether every consideration of the discredit resulting from the scene of last night; of the extent of which you could not but have been sensible, when you thought proper, as a remedy for it, to send me the offer of 'placing your office in other hands.' Ever, my dear Huskisson, your's most sincerely,

"WELLINGTON."

"The Rt. Hon. W. Huskisson."

On receiving this letter I will in candour avow that, taking it as an answer to the letter I had sent, and seeing that at this time there could be no possibility of what I had originally intended being misunderstood,—I did think, and I must still say, that this was a harsh proceeding on the part of the noble Duke. His first understanding is, that my letter left him no option; his next version is, that I had attempted to do an act utterly unworthy of any man who ever had the honour of a seat in his Majesty's councils; that I had attempted to place him and my other colleagues in a situation in which I was driving them to solicit me to remain in office, at the loss of their public character. I perfectly understand that, if I had said to my colleagues in the cabinet, or to the noble Duke, "I have sustained a grievance, and, unless you redress it, I will resign," there would have been some little appearance of reason in the accusation. I can understand, too, that if, entertaining opinions differing from the majority of my colleagues on any important subject, I had said to them, "Unless you come over to my opinions I will resign;" the reasoning of the noble Duke might have been just. What I had said was, "I have done that at which you may justly take offence, and I am ready to pay the price of my conduct." If I had been told in reply, "what you have done was wrong, but by no means sufficient to require such a penalty as that to which you allude," I should have made no fur-

ther observation upon the subject. But I must say, that it was painful for me to receive from an individual, for whose personal character I have the most unfeigned respect, and with whom I had acted confidentially in the King's service, more than an insinuation that I was playing a part, for which, indeed, I should have deserved to have been censured in the strongest manner, and even expelled indignantly from the councils of my colleagues. Though I felt myself injured by the noble Duke's reply, which I have last read, yet I trust the House will see in my answer that I suppressed any indication of such a feeling.

(Private.)

"Colonial Office, 21st May, 1828.

"My dear Duke;—In justice to myself I cannot acquiesce for a moment in the construction which your letter of last night puts upon my conduct.

"You cannot refuse to me the right of knowing the motives of my own actions, and I solemnly declare that, in both my letters, I was actuated by one and the same feeling. It was simply this.—That it was not for me, but for you, as the head of the government, to decide how far my vote made it expedient to remove me from his Majesty's service. I felt that I had no alternative, consistently with personal honour (in a difficulty not of my own seeking or creating) but to give that vote;—that the question in itself was one of very minor importance;—that the disunion was more in appearance than in reality; but I also felt that, possibly, you might take a different view of it, and that, in case you should, I ought (as I had once done on a similar occasion with Lord Liverpool) to relieve you from any difficulty, arising out of personal consideration towards me, in deciding upon a step to which you might find it your public duty to resort on the occasion.

"It was under this impression alone that I wrote to you immediately upon my return from the House of Commons.

"If you had not misconceived that impression, as well as the purport of my second letter, I am persuaded that you could not suppose me guilty of the arrogance of expecting 'that you and his Majesty's government should submit yourselves to the necessity of

soliciting me to remain in my office,' or do me the injustice of believing that I could be capable of placing you in the alternative of choosing between the continuance of my services (such as they are), and the loss to your administration of one particle of character, which, I agree with you, is the foundation of public confidence.

"If, understanding my communication as I intended it to be understood, you had, in any way, intimated to me, either that the occurrence, however unfortunate, was not one of sufficient moment to render it necessary for you, on public grounds, to act in the manner in which I had assumed that you possibly might think it necessary—or that you were under that necessity—in either case there would have been an end of the matter. In the first supposition, I should have felt that I had done what, in honour and fairness towards you, I was bound to do; but it never could have entered my imagination that I had claimed, or received, any sacrifice whatever from you, or any member of his Majesty's government.

"On the other hand, nothing can be further from my intention than to express an opinion, that the occasion was not one in which you might fairly consider it your duty to advise his Majesty to withdraw from me the seals of office, on the ground of this vote. I do not, therefore, complain; but I cannot allow that my removal shall be placed on any other ground;—I cannot allow that it was my own act;—still less can I admit that, when I had no other intention than to relieve the question, on which you had to decide, from any personal embarrassment, this step on my part should be ascribed to feelings, the very reverse of those by which alone I was actuated, either towards you or his Majesty's government. Believe me to be, my dear duke, your's very sincerely,

"W. HUSKISSON."

From this letter the House will see what were the spirit and feeling in which I acted. Having read a part of this correspondence, I must, in order to render it intelligible, read the whole. The communication which I received from the noble Duke in answer to this letter is in the following words:—

"London, May 21, 1828.

"My dear Huskisson;—In consequence of your last letter, I feel it to be necessary to recall to your recollection, the circumstances under which I received your letter of Tuesday morning.

"It is addressed to me at two o'clock in the morning, immediately after a debate and division in the House of Commons. It informs me that you lose no time in affording me an opportunity of placing your office in other hands, as the only means in your power of preventing an injury to the King's service which you describe. It concludes by 'regretting the necessity for troubling me with this communication.'

"Could I consider this in any other light than as a formal tender of the resignation of your office, or that I had any alternative but either to solicit you to remain in office contrary to your sense of duty, or to submit your letter to the King?

"If you had called on me the next morning after your vote, and had explained to me in conversation what had passed in the House of Commons, the character of the communication would have been quite different; and I might have felt myself at liberty to discuss the whole subject with you, and freely to give an opinion upon any point connected with it. But I must still think that if I had not considered a letter couched in the terms in which that letter is couched, and received under the circumstances under which I received it, as a tender of resignation, and had not laid it before the King, I should have exposed the King's government and myself to very painful misconstructions. My answer to your letter will have informed you that it surprised me much, and that it gave me great concern. I must consider therefore the resignation of your office as your own act, and not as mine. Ever your's, most sincerely,

"WELLINGTON."

I will not stop to examine whether the description of my letter is a very accurate one, or to remark that, if explanation was wanted, the noble duke might easily have sent for me; though, I own, I cannot see the great difference which would have resulted from the substitution of a conversation for a confidential letter.

The noble Duke talks of the "very painful misconstruction" to which he must have been exposed, if he had not laid my letter before the King. How this "misconstruction" was to arise I know not. It could not arise

from me, I am sure; and, as far as I was concerned, the knowledge of the transaction was confined to ourselves. In conclusion, to mark more emphatically his sense of my conduct, he tells me that I must consider my resignation as "your own act and not as mine." But when the noble Duke says, that my remaining in office was "contrary to my own sense of duty," I really am at a loss to know what part of my communication justifies this assertion. If I had ever felt so, I should not have waited for the noble duke to call for my resignation. The House will perceive, from what I have just read, that, after all the explanations —verbal and written, which had been given—after all the statements that had been made by my noble friends, the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary at War—the noble duke pertinaciously adheres to his own misconstruction of my first letter—he will not suffer me to escape from it, and insists that my resignation is my own act.

After this communication, received on Thursday morning, of course I considered the matter as at an end. My right honourable friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department knows that such was my view. I had only one solicitude left.—As soon as I was informed by Lord Dudley and Lord Palmerston, on Tuesday evening, of the misconstruction which the duke had put upon my letter "private and confidential," I necessarily assumed that the King had been advised to regard it in the same light. I was, therefore, very anxious, as one of his Majesty's servants, to set myself right with my royal master. I immediately wrote to his Majesty to solicit the honour of an audience. To my humble request I had received no answer. I took steps to let it be known to the noble Duke, that nothing was further from my wish than to appeal to his Majesty against the advice, whatever it might be, of his prime minister;—that I only wished to

state to his Majesty what my real meaning had been, and to relieve myself from the painful light in which I must appear to his Majesty, in having laid before him, as a formal and positive resignation, a paper in which, had it been intended for such a purpose, I had been so forgetful of all that I owed to his Majesty, for his unvarying and uniform confidence, and, I may add, personal kindness, as to have forsaken his service without one expression of regret, or one assurance of dutiful attachment and respect.

Late on the evening of Friday, I was told, on the part of the duke, that he did not consider the matter as at an end—that as a man of sense and of the world, I must know very well what I ought to do; but that he could suggest nothing, lest it should appear either like dictation or collusion. I said to my noble friend, from whom I received this communication—"this is very oracular, the little sense I may possess I have exhausted in explanation, carried to redundancy, of what I really meant. I have no objection to say any thing that is consistent with truth, but I know the King is impressed with a conviction that I have sent in my resignation, and that I persist in it; and if his Majesty has been advised not to allow me an audience, in which I might assure him that such was not my intention, there is no further step which I can take with honour to myself, till I have had an opportunity of removing that impression."

I added, that I did not see the fairness (whilst I was held to a misconstruction, disavowed the instant it was known to me), of expecting me to consent to embark in a game of political blind-man's buff, in which (greatly, perhaps, to the amusement of the lookers-on) I might meet with an awkward, if not irretrievable, tumble, without ever catching the object which I was called upon to pursue.

This communication, therefore, remained without any result.

On Sunday morning, my noble friend, having again seen the Duke of Wellington, came to me between eleven and twelve, and gave me to understand that it was not intended that I should have the audience which, five days before, I had solicited of his Majesty. My noble friend, I have since learnt, was further charged to communicate to me, that unless I set myself right with the duke before half-past two that day, he could allow me no further time. My noble friend did not deliver this message. He did not draw a line around me and say in the words of Popilius—"Priusquam hoc circulo excedas, redde responsum Imperatori, quod referam."—It is probable that he did not think such a message, under all the circumstances, consistent with good taste; and I thank my noble friend for the delicacy which induced him to spare me this part of his communication. I am obliged to mention this incident, because the omission led to an explanation which I was afterwards obliged to make in an additional letter to the noble duke.

Immediately upon my noble friend's leaving me, I wrote to the noble Duke the letter which I am about to read, and which I had intended should close the correspondence on my part.

"Downing Street, 25th May 1828.

"My dear Duke;—On Tuesday last I wrote to the king to solicit an audience. His majesty has not yet been pleased to grant me this honour.

"In the expectation (not unnatural for me to entertain in the situation which I hold) of being afforded an opportunity of waiting upon his majesty, I have deferred acknowledging your letter of the 21st, which, passing by altogether all that is stated in mine of the same date, you conclude in the following words—'I must, therefore,

consider the resignation of your office as your own act, and not as mine.'

"I will not revert to the full explanation which I have already given you on this subject. Not denying that my first letter might be capable of the construction which you put upon it, I would ask you, whether it be usual, after a construction has been, from the first moment, explicitly disavowed, to persist that it is the right one? It being, however, the construction to which you adhere, I must assume, as you laid the letter before his majesty, that you advised his majesty upon it, and that his majesty is, therefore, under the same misapprehension as yourself of what I meant; the more especially as I have no means of knowing whether my subsequent letters have been laid before his majesty.

"It was for the purpose of setting right any erroneous impression on the royal mind that I sought to be admitted, as soon as possible, into his majesty's presence.

"I was then, as I am still, most anxious to assure his majesty, that nothing could have been further from my intention, than that the letter in question should have been at all submitted to his majesty:—to make known to his majesty the circumstances and feelings under which it had been written:—to point out to him, that I had taken the precaution (usual between ministers in matters of a delicate and confidential nature, when it is wished to keep the subject, as much as possible, confined to the respective parties), of marking the letter "private and confidential;" that I understood that this letter, so marked specially to guard its object, had been, without previous communication of any sort with me, in respect to the transaction referred to, but not explained, in the letter itself, laid before his majesty, as conveying to the foot of the throne my positive resignation.

"I should further have had to state to his majesty the great pain and concern which I felt at finding that a paper should have been submitted to his majesty, and described to him as conveying my resignation of the seals, in a form so unusual, and with a restriction so unbecoming towards my sovereign, as is implied in the words "private and confidential;"—that in a necessity so painful (had I felt such a necessity) as that of asking his majesty's permission to withdraw from his service, my first anxiety would have been to lay my reasons, in a respectful, but direct, communication from myself at his majesty's feet; but that, most certainly, in whatever mode

conveyed, the uppermost feeling of my heart would have been to have accompanied it with those expressions of dutiful attachment and respectful gratitude, which I owe to his majesty for the many and uniform proofs of confidence and kindness, with which he has been graciously pleased to honour me since I have held the seals of the Colonial Department.

"If I had been afforded an opportunity of thus relieving myself from the painful position in which I stand towards his majesty, I should then have entreated of his majesty's goodness and sense of justice, to permit a letter, so improper for me to have written (if it could have been in my contemplation that it would have been laid before his majesty as an act of resignation), to be withdrawn. Neither should I have concealed from his majesty my regret, considering the trouble which has unfortunately occurred both to his majesty and his government, that I had not taken a different mode of doing what, for the reasons fully stated in my letter of the 21st, I found myself bound in honour to do, so as to have prevented, perhaps, the misconception arising out of my letter, written immediately after the debate.

"I have now stated to you frankly, and without reserve, the substance of all that I was anxious to submit to the king. I have done so in the full confidence that you will do me the favour to lay this statement before his majesty, and that I may be allowed to implore of his majesty that he will do me the justice to believe that, of all who have a right to prefer a claim to be admitted to his royal presence, I am the last who, in a matter relating to myself, would press that claim in a manner unpleasant to his majesty's wishes or inclinations. I bow to them with respectful deference, still retaining, however, a confidence, founded on the rectitude of my intentions, that, in being removed from his majesty's service, I may be allowed the consolation of knowing, that I have not been debarred from the privilege of my office, in consequence of my having incurred his majesty's personal displeasure. Believe me, my dear Duke, your's very sincerely,

"W. HUSKISSON."

"His Grace the Duke of Wellington, K. G."

This letter was sent to Apsley House about five o'clock; —between seven and eight I received one from the noble Duke, couched, I acknowledge, with great satisfaction, in terms of kindness and regret. It was as follows:

"London, May 25, 1828.

"My dear Huskisson;—It is with great concern that I inform you that I have at last attended his majesty, and have received his instructions respecting an arrangement to fill your office.

"I sincerely regret the loss of your valuable assistance in the arduous task in which I am engaged. Believe me ever, your's most sincerely,

"WELLINGTON."

"The Right Hon. W. Huskisson."

If any one, struck by these words "at last," asks why it was absolutely necessary so precipitately, and without any attempt at previous communication, to carry my private and confidential letter to the king on Tuesday morning, and to advise his majesty that it was a positive and absolute resignation, if there were no inconvenience to arise in delaying to advise his majesty to act upon it for so many days afterwards, I can only state my inability to answer the question.

This letter having been delivered to me about half-past seven (as I have before stated), I was surprised, about an hour later, to receive from my noble friend, the Earl of Dudley, the letter, which had been left at Apsley House about five o'clock, unopened. It is on this account that I was obliged to mention the communication which my noble friend had not made to me in the morning. My letter reached Apsley House about five o'clock; but the impression on the mind of the noble Duke was, as I assume, that the whole of his message had been delivered to me, and therefore, as the time was past, he considered my letter as having come too late. The clock had struck! I immediately wrote again to the Duke of Wellington, returning my letter, and begging him to do me the honour to open it.

"Downing Street, 9½ P. M. 25th May, 1828.

"My dear Duke;—Lord Dudley has just sent to me, unopened, my letter to you, which I forwarded to Apsley House about five o'clock this afternoon.

"This letter was written as soon as I was given to understand by Lord Dudley, who called here after an interview with you this morning, that his majesty had not signified any intention of granting me the honour of an audience. No other mode, therefore, remaining open to me of conveying my sentiments to the king, I addressed myself to you, for the purpose of bringing before his majesty, in the shape of a written communication, what I am prevented from stating to his majesty in person.

"I feel confident that you will not deny me this favour, and you will be satisfied by the contents of my letter (which I now return), that in writing it nothing was further from my intention than to attempt to intrude myself between you and the arrangements, which, upon my removal from office (for such I have considered the result of our correspondence since your letter of the twenty-first) you have received his majesty's instructions to make.

"Your letter, communicating this fact, reached me about half past seven this evening. I thank you for the information, and for the kind manner in which you advert to any feeble assistance which I may have been able to give to your administration, as well as for the expression of the concern with which you have advised his majesty to place my office in other hands. Believe me to be, my dear duke, ever your's, very sincerely,

"W. HUSKISSON."

The barrier which had been interposed between me and the throne being now removed, on Monday morning I received his Majesty's gracious commands to attend his Majesty. I did so. Of what passed in the royal closet I am, of course, not at liberty to utter one word; but I cannot be restrained from saying, that I met with a reception from his majesty so gracious, and so far exceeding anything which could have been deserved for services infinitely superior to any which it may have been in my power to render, as well as with so much personal kindness, that I shall for ever retain a warm and grateful recollection of these proofs of his Majesty's favour and condescension.

The same evening, I received the following letter from the Duke of Wellington, which closed the correspondence.

"London, 26th May, 1828.

"My dear Huskisson;—I have received your letter of yesterday, accompanied by another letter from you dated also yesterday, which I had returned to Lord Dudley, under the impression that I ought not to open it without your previous consent, under the circumstances that existed at the time that I received it.

"I have laid both before the King. In answer I have only to repeat, that I considered your letter of the 20th as a formal tender of the resignation of your office; and that the circumstance of its being marked "private and confidential," did not alter the character of the letter, or relieve me from the painful duty of communicating its contents to his Majesty, as I did in person.

"Your subsequent letters did not, according to my understanding of them, convey any disavowal of your intention to tender your resignation. I laid them before his Majesty and my answers to them, and I communicated to Lord Dudley that I had done so.

"The King informed me, I think on Wednesday the twenty-first, that you had desired to have an audience of his Majesty; and that he intended to receive you on the day but one after. I did not consider it my duty to advise his Majesty to receive you at an earlier period.

"It is scarcely necessary for me to observe, that your letter to me of the twentieth was entirely your own act, and wholly unexpected by me. If the letter was written hastily and inconsiderately, surely the natural course was for you to withdraw it altogether; and thus relieve me from the position in which, without any fault of mine, it had placed me; compelling me either to accept the resignation which it tendered, or to solicit you to continue to hold your office.

"This latter step was, in my opinion, calculated to do me personally, and to the King's government, great disservice; and it appeared to me, that the only mode by which we could be extricated from the difficulty in which your letter had placed us was, that the withdrawal of your letter should be your own spontaneous act; and that it should be adopted without delay.

"The interference of his majesty, pending our correspondence, would not only have placed his Majesty in a situation in which he ought not to be placed in such a question, but it would have subjected me to the imputation that that interference had taken place on my suggestion, or with my concurrence.

"I did not consider it my duty to advise his Majesty to interfere in any manner whatever.

"His Majesty informed me this day, that he had written to you this morning, appointing an audience in the course of the day. Believe me, ever your's, most sincerely,

"WELLINGTON."

"Right Hon. W. Huskisson."

I will not dissemble to you, Sir, that, from rumours which reached me in the course of Saturday, and which I know were industriously circulated on that day, I was enabled to form a shrewd guess at the measure of submission which was expected on my part. If I had been prepared virtually to admit, that the misconstruction put upon my first letter was what I had really meant;—that it was right to hold me to that misconstruction, and, by consequence of such admission, further to force me to acknowledge that the explanations I had given, were not only unfounded, but fairly open to the injurious suspicions by which they had been met;—in short, Sir, if I had said—not in words, perhaps, but in a manner which would infallibly have been so construed,—that I had resigned, and that my resignation was either positive and absolute, or put forth with the unworthy design of trying how far I could raise myself by disparaging the government of which I was a member, I might have been permitted to retain the seals of a Secretary of State. I am addressing an assembly of gentlemen,—I leave to their personal feelings to appreciate mine on making such a discovery. God forbid that any man should ever be a Secretary of State who could pause on such conditions, and agree to be admitted to his Sovereign only when, and as, the prime minister might permit! He might, indeed, be the chief clerk—the head manager of a great executive department,—but he could no longer be a minister of State, and a confidential adviser of his Sove-

reign. He might, indeed, continue to appear among his colleagues, but he would carry into the cabinet a consciousness of his own nullity, and self-degradation; or, if he could for a moment stifle such consciousness, the looks of those around him would not be tardy to remind him of it—to tell him in language, more intelligible than words, that it was time to withdraw for ever from such a place. Then, indeed, would he have relinquished, not only what is now taken from me—the power, and rank, and patronage of high office—but also that which I trust I preserve—public character—personal honour—the undiminished good-will and approbation of my friends, and the chance, as a member of this House, of still continuing to serve my country. These, Sir, are titles which, to win and wear, is, fortunately, not the exclusive privilege of any particular class in this community. They are titles, for which it is my birthright as an Englishman (not being a Catholic), to contend in fair competition with the proudest and wealthiest in the land.

Sir, I began by stating that I had not resigned, and that in respect to the motive of others in removing me from office, as I know nothing, I should say nothing. But this I may say, that when I consented to remain in office, on the formation of the duke of Wellington's administration, I did so contrary to the judgment and to the advice of many friends. I did so exclusively upon public grounds;—upon an offer in which I understood that so many of those with whom I had acted in the former administration were included, that I did not think we should be justified, when our assistance was asked for, in withholding it from the public service. I thought that in our joint acceptance—in our known similarity of opinion—in the Executive Departments which we filled—in our mutual co-operation and confidence—and in the explanations which we had received, we were

more likely to uphold the principles and policy to which we were attached, than by any other course of conduct.

Sir, I know by what powerful influences those principles are opposed. My eyes were not shut—how could they be, after what had happened to my late lamented friend—to the virulence with which those who support them are assailed. Has it been found that these powerful influences were no longer to be stemmed, that they could no longer be resisted?—Has it been declared by them, that the price of their support must be, disconnexion between the noble Duke's government and those whom they persecute?—Have sacrifices and victims been required—or, has it, as I incline to believe, been deemed expedient, for the interest of the King's government, to come to a closer union with one party by casting off the other?—If so, I wish the separation had been placed upon its true grounds. I should greatly have preferred to have been told that, from dislike to those measures of policy, which I believe to be for the advantage of the country—from mistrust of their tendency—and from jealousy and apprehension of the power which office gave me of bringing them forward—it was become necessary to allay certain angry feelings, as the only means of securing the steady support of some whose countenance and cordiality are deemed essential to the administration of which the noble Duke is the head.

Perhaps, but for this change of feeling—but for this change of policy—words coming from high authority, scarcely more than a twelve-month old, might have been recollected. It might have been said of a letter written under all the circumstances which I have already described, "If he was hasty in coming to this decision—if the decision was founded in error, he ought to be informed. He has always been on the best terms of good-will and confidence with all his col-

leagues; he never made difficulties, or acted otherwise than with a view to accommodate differences of opinion. Then, if he has taken a hasty or intemperate view of this case, why not come forward and render him the service which he has more than once rendered to others, by representing to him that he is wrong." If the high authority from which I quote these sentiments, so honourable to his character and so considerate to human imperfection, could have been the party to whom I had addressed my letter at two o'clock in the morning, if he could have been told, within four hours after the receipt of it, that he had mistaken the meaning, and that it pointed not at those serious consequences which he apprehended, would he not have said, "I am happy to have been so soon informed of my mistake before the knowledge of it has gone further, and when it is so easy to set it right?" This I know was the answer naturally anticipated by my noble friend, who first apprized the Duke of Wellington of his mistake; but the answer which he received was, "no mistake—a positive resignation."

Sir, this was the answer of the Duke of Wellington, the head of his Majesty's government in May 1828. The authority which I have quoted, was the Duke of Wellington, in May 1827, when explaining to the other House of Parliament, why he was no longer a member of his Majesty's councils.

Notwithstanding the self and mutual gratulations of the enemies to all improvement; in spite of the blundering zeal of some of that party who find in the present removal of myself and my political friends from office, the only adequate apology which the head of the government can make to them for having admitted us at all—who libel the noble Duke by stating, "that they are willing to excuse him because we may have been useful just at first;" in spite of

the boisterous exultation, and venerable buffooneries displayed at that meeting, which once a year congregates to attempt a fraud upon the ignorance of the living, and to pronounce a libel upon the memory of the illustrious dead —I say, Sir, in spite of these boisterous exultations, so suddenly substituted for the loud and bitter wailings recently vented from the same quarter, over the progress of religious liberty in this country, and the manifestation of a desire, at least in this House, to extend to Ireland the same blessing— I say, Sir, in spite of all these signs of the times—these untoward omens,—I cannot believe that the triumph of that party is so complete, or so secure, as they anticipate.

Knowing the sentiments of my right honourable friend at the head of the Administration in this House,—knowing that, with the single exception of the Catholic question, his opinions and his principles upon all questions of public policy have hitherto been in strict unison with my own,— knowing the feelings and views which prevail, at least in this House of Parliament, I cannot believe, whatever doctrines I hear laid down by the pretended admirers of discipline and vigour, that my right honourable friend is prepared to subscribe to the principles of those who advocate these doctrines. I cannot believe that he is prepared to admit that the real and substantive power of the state should be wielded according to the dictation of an unknown junta abjuring for valid reasons—reasons which no man who knows them will call in question—all ostensible and responsible stations in the councils of the country, but claiming a veto upon the measures of those who are responsible, and a right to proscribe those whom they do not like;—I cannot believe that my right honourable friend is prepared to uphold the power of such a party against the power of public opinion;—I cannot believe that he thinks with them, that the great business of legislation

is to arrest the progress of improvement, and to counteract the growth of intelligence;—I cannot believe that he looks with the same jealous eye as they do at the spread of that intelligence;—I cannot believe that he is afraid, as they are, of its example in other countries, and that with them he dreads the interchange of mind between the different parts of the civilized world, almost as much as they dread a more liberal and free interchange of the advantages of commerce.—I cannot believe that, with them, he would gladly pay the price of lowering this country to the fifth or sixth station among the powers of Europe, if by so doing they could enforce generally over the world the principles of the Holy Alliance, and subject the political institutions, and the civil rights of nations, the moral influence of free discussion and a free press upon the expansive mind of man, to the perpetual tutelage of a junta of continental statesmen, of the same school as themselves, but backed and supported by the great armies of Europe. I cannot believe that he has such a dread of all improvement, as to think that it would be cheaply repelled from this country, by the adoption of such a system as this. Neither can I think that he believes it would be safe to make the attempt.

For my own part, Sir, I shall continue, out of office, what I have been in office,—a friend to the institutions of my country,—a sincere believer that they are the best adapted to promote the happiness, and to preserve the freedom of my fellow-subjects; but convinced, at the same time, that, in the furtherance of the very principles upon which they were framed by the wisdom of former ages, they are capable of improvement, and may require from time to time, additions and alterations; that moderate and cautious reparations are the true way to preserve the edifice in its present symmetry and strength; and that to neglect those reparations is to risk its destruction. Upon

this principle I shall continue to act, and to watch the measures of Government, through good report and through evil report, so long as I have a seat in this House and a voice in the legislature of the country.

It only remains for me, Sir, to thank the House for the indulgence which they have extended to me, upon an occasion of all others the most painful and irksome, in as much as their time has, in a great degree, been taken up with an explanation relating to myself. I trust I have made it appear that it is not by my own act that I find myself disconnected with the service of my Sovereign. I will not dissemble, that the high office from which I have been removed was to me an object of just and honourable ambition; —that I forego with regret the opportunities which it might have afforded to me of endeavouring to improve the condition of those distant parts of the empire, placed more immediately under its superintendance;—of strengthening their bonds of union with the mother country,—and of rendering them more valuable to it. I will not dissemble that I equally regret the loss of those opportunities, which power might have afforded me, of following up and perfecting those measures of general commercial policy, to which my attention has been turned for years. In the eclipse of those prospects, and the loss of that power,—I carry with me into retirement the high consolation of reflecting on the cordial confidence with which, whilst in his service, I was honoured by my Sovereign, and the gratifying recollection of the kind assurances of his approbation of my past labours, when I placed at his feet the seals of office. Still, in the mode and circumstances of my removal it would be hypocrisy in me not to say that I derive consolation, from the conviction that, without a more cordial support and a more entire credit for good intentions than it appears I was likely to receive, it would have been worse than useless for

me to have continued the unequal struggle in which I was engaged, between the increasing difficulties of a laborious public life, and diminishing health and strength to bear up against them.

SMALL NOTE CURRENCY—CIRCULATION OF SCOTCH NOTES IN ENGLAND.

June 3.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer having moved for leave to bring in a Bill "to restrain the negociation within England of Promissory Notes and Inland Bills of Exchange under a limited sum, issued by Bankers or others in Scotland or Ireland," Sir James Graham moved as an amendment, "That a Select Committee be appointed, to inquire into the state of the Circulation in Promissory Notes under the value of five pounds in England."

Mr. Huskisson said, he would detain the House but a short time, at that late hour. It had been long his lot to address them on all the general subjects which the honourable baronet had touched upon with a rapid and lucid view; but he would not go into a discussion, on the present occasion, either upon the question of the depreciation of the currency, or upon the conduct of the country banks, or upon the doctrines and blunders, as the honourable baronet had described them, of the Committees of 1810 and 1819. He regretted that he had not had the advantage that night of hearing the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It was, therefore, that he wished very shortly to state the grounds on which he should vote for the proposition of his right honourable friend, and most decidedly against the amendment. He agreed with the noble lord* in the general proposition, that provided no

* Lord Howick.

risk or inconvenience attended the proceeding, it was desirable to go into committee on such subjects; for the more they were inquired into, the more should we increase the stock of our practical experience, the want of which had led to almost all the errors we had committed, to the great detriment of the national prosperity. But he would ask, was there no risk in unsettling the mind of the public, as to what was to be the future state of the currency? He had no hesitation in saying, that many questions must be brought under the consideration of such a committee, if it should be appointed, the discussion of which could not fail to alarm the country. They would have to inquire into the subject of the Bank restriction.

The honourable baronet seemed anxious to avoid a panic, and had stated the evils that arose from great fluctuations; but, with all his well-founded aversion to these calamities, the honourable baronet was going the direct road to another panic and to other fluctuations, if his suggestions should be adopted by the House. The first consequence of undertaking such an inquiry would be, the awakening of a general expectation, that they were about to restrain cash payments again; the next, that they were about to allow an unlimited issue of one-pound notes. Then would come the speculations and fluctuations which would naturally arise from such fruitful sources of extravagance and uncertainty; and thus would return the whole mass of those alarming evils, which every one concurred in deprecating. If they consented to repeal the bill of 1826, now that it was so near being carried into complete effect, they would invite back the whole host of afflictions under which the country had suffered. It was absurd to talk of a paper currency convertible into gold; for the moment they introduced paper, they would banish coin, except such coin as was of lower denomination than the paper. It

was impossible to retain either the present or any other amount of gold, except upon that condition; for if we returned to the issue of one-pound notes, we could not keep any coin in circulation, which was not less in value than the pound sterling.

The noble Lord had asked whether, in the present circumstances of the country, it would not be a great object to save the annual expense upon two and twenty millions of gold currency? In the first place, the expense was comparatively of no importance; and in the next place, the provision which the noble Lord had recommended, of a paper circulation convertible into gold, was a fallacy, as he had already shown; for when the paper was let in, the gold would disappear, and in this way they would soon be saved the whole expense of a gold circulation. They might vote the money; they might coin it; but how could they retain it in the country? The honourable baronet had talked of fluctuations as the greatest evil under which the country had suffered; but this, instead of being an argument for going into a committee, was the greatest objection to such a proceeding. If they allowed the country banks to go on increasing their own issues, and encouraging the spirit of speculation, which would be the consequence, the Bank of England would again be placed in the same situation that it was in the year 1825, and would then, perhaps, realize, in its fullest extent, the ruin which it had experienced but partially on the former occasion. He would say that it was impossible, consistently with the interest and safety of the country, to allow the country banks a power of adding to their circulation as they pleased. Supposing a rise of price to take place in consequence of a deficient harvest, the value of money would then be lowered. The high price of commodities would encourage the speculator to deal in those articles, under an expectation that the

advance would continue; but then would come a glut, and then a fall; and then the fluctuations which precede a panic; and finally, the panic itself. But, in the midst of all these changes, there was one commodity that would not rise, and that was the treasure deposited in the vaults of the Bank of England; so that unless they took some strong measures, the effect of which was panic, they would not be able to check the spirit of speculation, which the issue of country notes had encouraged.

It was the want of a proper metallic currency that led to the difficulties of the year 1825; and therefore, as a measure of precaution, he would support the measure of 1826, instead of again unsettling the whole of the arrangements, which extended to all the country banks in England. He believed, if the fact were ascertained, it would be found that most of the country bankers would rather see the system carried into complete effect, than abandoned on the very eve of its completion. When they knew, as he hoped they would by the decision of that night, that the arrangements would be completed, not disturbed, they would adopt a more settled principle of accommodation and credit, and pursue that course which was most consistent with the interests of the country, instead of wandering into those vague and uncertain chimeras, which must result from a vacillating spirit in the policy which professed to regulate their proceedings. For these and for other reasons, he should oppose the amendment of the honourable baronet, and vote for the original motion.

The House divided: For the amendment, 45. For the original motion, 154.

EAST-INDIA TRADE—EQUALIZATION OF THE DUTIES ON SUGAR.

June 16.

In pursuance of the notice he had given,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose. He said, that although he had, on a former day, announced his intention to present a petition from the merchants of Calcutta, respecting the trade with India, still he did not mean to provoke any discussion on the very important question to which it related. He took this course, because he thought that incidental discussions on petitions were unwise, and ought to be avoided. Important subjects would, in his opinion, come under the consideration of the House with better effect when they were brought forward in the ordinary and regular course of business: and therefore he should, upon this occasion, confine himself to stating, as shortly as possible, the nature of the petition which he held in his hand. That petition was intrusted to him, he might almost say, on behalf of every British merchant in Calcutta, and of a very considerable number of the most wealthy and distinguished native merchants in that opulent city,—persons whose skill, enterprize, and industry, if fostered and encouraged, must prove highly beneficial to this country, inasmuch as many of that active class of individuals were willing to embark their property in the furtherance of manufactures, of navigation, and of those arts which led to general prosperity. He would also say, that as these parties were not, either directly or virtually, represented in that House, they came before the legislature with peculiar claims to attention.

Now, the petitioners stated, and they did so, he had no doubt, with great sincerity, that they felt much satisfaction

at the increased facility given of late years to a commercial intercourse with other countries and nations, as well as with the mother country and all its dependencies. They felt confident that the same system would still be pursued, and that on any occasion, when the legislature introduced measures affecting the trade between this country and India, they would consider free intercourse as the rule, and restriction as the exception, to be only maintained on some specific ground of necessity or of commercial policy. He could not think there was a doubt that Parliament would take this view of the subject, when they were called on, as at no distant period they would be, to consider of the renewal of the East-India Company's Charter; because, if they looked back to the effects which had been produced by the relaxation that took place after the last renewal of the Charter, they would find, that the direct commerce between this country and British India had been more than doubled. New branches of trade had sprung up, and others were every day arising; and that, too, contrary to the predictions of those who were considered to be the great practical authorities on this subject, and who were well acquainted with the manners and habits of the immense population that was placed under our rule.

In the same manner those authorities confidently stated, that the greatest possible evil would result from any permission or privilege being given to British subjects to send their capital to India, for the purpose of investing it in projects connected with the improvement of manufactures and commerce in India. These opinions had, however, he believed, given way to more liberal views, and it was now allowed, that the capital of this country might be employed with great propriety, and most beneficially, in the improvement of the arts and manufactures of British India; and he knew, that where such a system had been

acted on, in Calcutta and its neighbourhood, a greater bond of union and good-will was observable between the British authorities and the natives—a great improvement in arts and manufactures had taken place—and those moral feelings which enabled individuals to discharge all the duties of social life were more sedulously cultivated. This country, therefore, ought not to be slow in extending civil rights to the people of Calcutta, which they did not before possess. The natives were now competent to serve on juries; and, in proportion as they formed an acquaintance with the English language, with English habits, and with English feelings, their improvement would become more decided and more rapid. He could only look to the increased intercourse between individuals of the two countries as a source of mutual benefit. It might be, and indeed was, considered as a subject which involved some degree of difficulty, and which demanded the maturest investigation.

He made these brief remarks with no other view but to deprecate discussion at present, and at the same time to point out the great importance of the petition. It would be a matter of the utmost importance, when the renewal of the Charter came under the consideration of Parliament, not to lose sight of those principles which were necessary for the improvement of navigation, the extension of commerce and manufactures, and, what was of infinite importance to the welfare of both those interests—a subject to which the anxious attention of the legislature ought to be directed—the improvement of the habits of the native population of India.

With these general views, he should merely state, that the petitioners farther observed to the House that they were satisfied that much inconvenience was felt and much injury sustained, in consequence of the inequality of duty on East and West-India sugars. That question had, however, been postponed to a future period, and therefore he should

not offer any opinion on it at present. The petitioners also complained, that other staples of India, such as cotton, &c., were, in consequence of the rate of duty, excluded from this country. In fact, they felt that those articles were treated as if they were not the produce of a British possession, but of a foreign colony; and they prayed that, even in the present session, some reform might be effected in the scale of duties. When these subjects came regularly to be discussed, he had no doubt that the utmost attention would be paid to them; and looking to the trade with the Indian Archipelago—looking to the various new sources of trade and commerce which were springing up—but more particularly looking to the probable intercourse between India and the liberated states of South America, he was perfectly satisfied that a field would be opened for the employment of British capital, much more extensive than was imagined by those who had not narrowly considered the subject. These branches of commerce were only in their infancy; but he was convinced that if they were encouraged the country would derive incalculable benefit from them. Having made these few remarks, he should beg leave to bring up the petition.

BRITISH SHIPPING INTEREST.

June 17.

General Gascoyne this day called the attention of the House to the state of the British Shipping Interest. He maintained that a considerable diminution in the trade had taken place, and moved, that the House should pledge itself to inquire into the causes thereof next session. After the motion had been opposed by Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Charles Grant, and Mr. Poulett Thompson, and supported by Mr. Robinson and Mr. Liddell,

Mr. Huskisson rose.—He said, that at that late hour of the night he would not trespass long upon the attention of

the House. In preceding sessions, he had already stated at large his views and principles, in reference to this important question; and it would be quite impossible for him to add any thing to the lucid and convincing statement of facts which his right honourable friend* had laid before the House upon this now almost exhausted subject. The honourable member for Dover† had expressed his indignant feelings at the treatment which he (Mr. Huskisson) had received from certain parties. He could assure the House, that such treatment had in no degree disturbed the tranquillity of his feelings, and if the ship-owners had only paid two hundred pounds to the writer of the scurrilous pamphlet alluded to, he would say they had measured their liberality by the low rate of freights. He would own that he had been rather startled by the first statement of the gallant general. The gallant general commenced by stating, that he was about to discuss—what? an abstract naval question, with a collateral view to commerce. He must acknowledge that his gallant colleague had well performed his promise—if by "abstract" he had meant a view of the subject, leaving out all the facts of the case—and certainly his gallant colleague treated the collateral part of the question with quite as little reserve.

The gallant general had argued upon what he seemed to consider an apparent deficiency, or falling-off, in the tonnage of the country, and in the number of seamen; and his proposition was—that, next session, they should inquire into a subject which had been already fully and satisfactorily explained. In the year 1825, he had felt it his duty to consolidate all the complicated and various acts relating to shipping; and by one provision then made, it was ordered, that all ships on coming into port should be registered, upon the oath of the captain. The old registry act, the

* Mr. Charles Grant. † Mr. Poulett Thompson.

26th of the late King, did not provide for the ships which might be lost at sea, or otherwise destroyed. Their registries still remained; but when he came to remodel the registries, in the year 1827, it was plain that those ships which were no longer in existence could not be registered *de novo*. Therefore, all the shipping which had been lost or destroyed, from the year 1774 to 1827, were omitted in the new registry list; and thereupon the gallant general called upon him to account for the apparent diminution in shipping between 1826 and 1827. Why, the same thing would have happened, if the remodelling of the registry act had taken place in 1814, or in any other year. But his gallant colleague inquired, what had become of the seamen? In reply to this question, he would state, that about a century and a half ago this House granted a land-tax to the Crown, and tax commissioners were appointed by King William in every county for its collection. These collectors were appointed only for the year; and it appeared, that each year the county members returned to Government the names of a number of gentlemen qualified to fill the office. From the period of King William to the present time, this law had continued unchanged, when at this moment a bill for that purpose was passing through the House; and it was found necessary to append to that bill the names of all the commissioners who had been appointed, and of all the persons who had been recommended by the several county members, from the time of King William to the present. The bill in that state had been already read a third time. It was a mass of such magnitude, that the other bills on the table would appear but as mere shreds before it; and, indeed, he would not like to be the person to move that it should be carried to the Lords by any single member of that House. Now, if any one proposed to take out of that bill the names of all those persons who were unques-

tionably dead—such as those appointed in the reigns of king William, queen Anne, king George I., II., and III.,—his honourable and gallant colleague would probably stare at the diminished bill, and ask "what had become of all the commissioners?"

His gallant friend had admitted, that there was an increase in trade, but he complained, that the expense in the men and shipping, by which the trade was carried on, had decreased. What, then, was the manifest object of his inquiry? That the shipping should be employed at higher rates,—that the country should be put to greater expense,—and that thus all competition with foreign countries should be prevented! His gallant friend had complained that, by the aid of steam-packets, vessels were enabled often a fortnight sooner to get to sea, and that British vessels often made two voyages in one season to the Baltic. His gallant friend ought at once to pass a law to put down steam-packets, and to prevent vessels making more than one voyage in the year to the Baltic. There was at present an agent in London for all the shipping belonging to the north-east coast of England. That gentleman was Mr. Richmond, one who had closely attended to the interests which it was his duty to watch over; and in a letter which he had received from that gentleman this very morning, there occurred the following sentence:—"It is not from want of employment that we complain; we have more of that than ever there was. Owing to the consumption of our noble and wealthy country, I am convinced that the importations of the year 1826 have exceeded those of the far-famed year 1825." This showed that the shipping interests were in no want of employment. He would admit that those interests, as well as the other interests of this country, had latterly made but small profits; but that was owing to general causes, which all must admit, while they deplored their

existence. The shipping interest complained, on the one hand; and so did the farmers and manufacturers on the other.

It had been over and over again asked, whether, under the present system, British shipping could stand a fair competition with the ships of other nations. He would answer that question by a statement which had been put into his hands by one of the members for the city of London.* The ports of Brazil were free ports; and it appeared that the trade of Brazil, between Brazil and Europe, owing to the want of shipping in Brazil, must be carried on, either by European ships, or by those of the United States. One article of Brazilian produce was sugar. That sugar could not be brought to England, on account of the high prohibitory duties. A great portion of it was exported to Trieste, and the other portion to Hamburgh. Twenty-eight vessels had sailed from Bahia in the last year laden with sugar to Trieste; and of these, four were Austrian, two were Swedes, one Russian; in all seven. The remaining twenty-one were English. Forty-eight ships had sailed to Hamburgh from Bahia, during the last year: of these twelve belonged to Hamburgh, two were Germans, one Dutch, one Swede, one Russian, and twenty-three of them were English. Thus, out of seventy-five vessels which carried on the trade of the Brazils with Europe, about fifty were English.

While he had been absent from the House, he had heard that his right honourable friend, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade,† had declared, that his own mind, and that of his right honourable colleague, the President of that Board, were "blank" upon this subject. He did not think, however, that they were persons likely to adopt any change in the general policy and principle of the com-

* Mr. Alderman Thompson. † Mr. Courtenay.

merce of this country, which had been introduced within the last eight years by his two noble friends, now in the other House, and himself. He was sure that the Vice-President of the Board of Trade was animated by such liberal feelings, that when he examined into the present system, he would come to the determination of maintaining and supporting it. The system had the approval of the present Secretary of the Home Department. It had the approval of every member of Lord Liverpool's government, and it was entirely approved of by Lord Liverpool himself.

He was anxious that it should go forth to foreign nations that this country would not retrograde from that system. And he was sure that his right honourable friend did not intend to hint, by the expression which had fallen from him, that any change was contemplated in that system. All he would ask was, let the system have fair play. If the blessings of peace could be continued, he was sure that, under that system, commerce, and all the interests connected with commerce, would flourish and improve. A charge had been made elsewhere by one who, because he had been a diplomatist, assumed the wisdom of a statesman, against this country for recognizing the independence of the South American States. It was a tardy wisdom which came in with its advice, when fortunately it was impossible to prevent the establishment of the independence of those great and extensive countries. Those states had unfortunately occupied the relation of belligerents with one another, and some infractions of the laws of nations had been committed. But, had such infractions never been committed by this and other civilized countries in a state of war? Why! Old Spain herself had sinned fifty times as much in that way, as the countries that had been freed from her yoke. There had not been one case

of irregularity committed by those belligerents on British commerce, which had not been made the subject of remonstrance. Those states, when they became more settled and tranquil, would, he was convinced, add increased wealth to the commerce of this country, and would be, in every way, productive of the greatest advantages to England. He concluded by repeating his hope, that the present commercial system would have fair play, and a fair trial, and he would stake his character and his reputation on its success.

The motion was negatived without a division.

NEW SOUTH WALES BILL—TRIAL BY JURY.

June 20.

On the order of the day for going into a committee on the Bill, "to provide for the administration of justice in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land," Sir James Mackintosh moved, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee, that they have power to receive a clause for the immediate establishment of Trial by Jury, and of an Elective Assembly in the said colony."

Mr. HUSKISSON said, he would offer a few observations in support of the measure which he had had the honour to propose. That measure had not been framed without a careful investigation into the actual circumstances of the colony, and the right honourable gentleman had done him but justice in saying, that he had kept in mind the importance of not forming any regulation which would prevent the gradual introduction into that country of all the institutions which were acknowledged to be so beneficial in this. He wished most sincerely to see the population of New South Wales in the perfect enjoyment of the advantages resulting from Trial by Jury and an Elective Assembly, on the same principle as those which were so

successful in their operations in England. But the question was, whether they could be so introduced, under all the peculiar circumstances at present attendant on the state of society in that colony. He thought they could not. There was, in fact, little difference between the proposition of the right honourable gentleman and his own. The one wished for the immediate introduction of trial by jury, giving the Governor a qualifying power of suspending it in any local district, according to his discretion. The other proposed, that it should be suspended for the present, but gave a power to the Governor gradually to extend the system, according as circumstances might admit of it. He also intended to move an amendment, "that in all civil cases the Supreme Court should have a discretionary power to grant trial by jury, if the parties were not averse to it."

If the right honourable member had made inquiry into the state of the population, he would have found it quite impossible practically to introduce, at present, the forms and proceedings appertaining to jury trial and constitutional elections for a legislative assembly. The right honourable member had talked of the manner in which he would gradually accustom an innocent boy of fourteen years, brought up in a monastery, to the business of life and the usages of the world. For his part, he could not perceive any similarity whatever between such a boy and the population of New South Wales,—two-thirds of which had been sent forth, not from a monastery, but from Newgate, condemned to fourteen years of punishment for their aggressions against the civil and moral interests of their fellow-subjects. The average of the inhabitants was one man to twenty thousand acres; and society, he need scarcely add, was on a footing quite different from that of this country. There there were feuds and jealousies, arising from the relative situation of freed men and mas-

ters. They could never be brought to intermix in social life; and the one class would be too often disposed, when an opportunity should present itself, to avenge former injuries and slights, which they might have received from the other. Would an Englishman, who went out to the country possessed of wealth, character, and education, choose to have his life and liberty exposed to the decision of a jury, nine or ten of whom were convicted criminals? He was satisfied, from the official inquiries which he had felt it his duty to institute, that nothing would so much tend to deter capital, and respectable members of society, from finding their way to this colony, as the establishment of trial by jury, in its existing condition. The species of trial now in operation there appeared to give the completest satisfaction, whatever might be its defects. There were no complaints against the administration of the laws, either on the part of the chief justice or of the population. He had no doubt but any man would prefer being tried by seven officers of honour and reputation, to risking his fate on the verdict of such persons as he had described.

As the duration of the bill was to be but seven years, he had given an earnest of his wish not to interfere with the future introduction of all the institutions which this country enjoyed. He was far from desirous to withhold from the colony any of the benefits to which it should be entitled. With respect to the election of a legislative council, he wished the right honourable gentleman to observe, that the present bill went a step towards imparting the privilege. The existing Government was neither arbitrary nor despotic; for there was a free press, which had a due influence and control over public affairs. All trials were held openly, and the population on all occasions manifested a jealousy with respect to their rights. Such being the present civil condition of the colony, he could not believe that all the

constitutional customs of this country would be there forgotten in a few years, as the right honourable gentleman apprehended. The glorious institutions of England would surely not appear alien to their habits and feelings, when new settlers of wealth, intelligence, and reputation, were every day removing thither, and thereby causing a constant infusion of British principles amongst the population.

It seemed to him that the proposition now suggested would place the Governor in a most invidious situation, as it would have him, at fifteen thousand miles' distance, to suspend a popular privilege which the Parliament of the mother country had been pleased to confer. For these reasons, he should persevere in recommending the original measure to the House, with a clause empowering the Governor to extend trial by jury in certain cases, and also requiring that, on the enactment of any new statute, he should make a declaration of the extent to which the British law obtained in the colony.

The motion was negatived.

DEFENCE OF THE CANADAS.

July 7.

Sir Henry Hardinge, the Secretary at War, having in a committee on the Ordnance Estimates, moved, "That 30,000*l.* be granted to defray the expense of Military Works at Kingston in Upper Canada, and Halifax in Nova Scotia, for the year 1828,"

Mr. HUSKISSON said, he had refrained from rising earlier, because he wished, before he came to decide upon the present vote, to hear it defended by some competent authority, who would be capable of proving the necessity which existed for those works, to which the vote had reference. He was happy to say, that he had found that authority for which he sought in the speech of the Colonial

Secretary,* whose explanation had perfectly convinced him of the necessity for this vote. He could not be brought to agree that the United States were not ambitious of possessing new territories; and of all the British settlements which those States were desirous of possessing, he felt assured that the Canadas formed the first object of their ambition. He conceived that the genius of that great and rising nation turned, perhaps naturally, in pursuit of objects by which to increase its strength and power; and he believed that the ambition which prompted America, in 1812, though perhaps it might be said to lie dormant now, was nevertheless ready to be called into action on the first occasion. The House should recollect, that but for the defenceless state of the Canadas in 1812, that aggression which cost this country so much of its best blood, and so much of its treasure also, would never have taken place. Were we not wise, therefore, to provide against a similar aggression, by adopting those precautions which wisdom and sound policy dictated? When the enormous expense incurred in conveying arms and military stores from one part of Canada to another was considered;—when it was calculated, that in time of war that expenditure amounted to nearly a thousand pounds per day, it was surely a measure of the soundest policy to adopt that plan, by which not only those expenses would be lessened, but the country fortified against invasion.

The question was this—shall England undertake to provide against future aggression in the Canadas, by rendering them capable of defence, or shall we give them up at once, with the loss of our national character and honour, and overlooking those sacred duties which, as a parent country, we owed to a tried and faithful people? If we determined, as surely as it became our station in the rank

* Sir George Murray.

of nations to do, to defend the Canadas, we ought, in the first place, to consider whether that defence should be undertaken with every fair prospect of success, or whether we should, by a niggard vote at present, not only render that success doubtful, but increase the expense which it shall cost us at least tenfold? The whole question amounted to this—Were we, if a struggle should again occur, to run the risk of losing the Canadas for ever, or would we at a much less expense, secure them?

The honourable member for Callington had spoken of the certainty of losing the Canadas, and in fact, all our foreign possessions, in the course of time, and in the natural order of events. Without endeavouring to combat a doctrine which was undoubtedly founded on the history of past ages, and the wisdom of experience which that history inculcated, he might just be permitted to observe, that the question at present appeared to be, not whether the Canadas should be ours in one hundred years to come, but whether they should continue in our possession, or become part and parcel of that immense and overgrowing republic, whose ambition was as unquestionable as the means to accomplish it were great and formidable? He for one, would say distinctly—"Retain your possessions at any cost." Indeed, so deeply was he convinced of the necessity of pursuing this course, that, looking to the immense advantages which we were either to gain or to lose for ever, according as we pursued a wise or an evil policy, if he could be positive that the amount of the present vote was to be expended with the positive certainty that in fifty years to come—not to speak of a hundred—the Canadas were to be free and independent, he yet would not hesitate as to the course he should pursue, but would as heartily give his vote under such circumstances, as he was prepared to give it now; and for this reason—that if the Canadas in time were to throw off the

control of the parent country, their independence ought to be achieved by the growth of national honour, opulence, and population. But, above all, let their independence be effected rather by the course of natural events than by any premature and unnatural separation. If they were to become independent by the growth of their own resources, let us learn this lesson of practical wisdom—not to encounter a ruinous war in endeavouring to regain them. If the time for separation should at last arrive, let it be like the severing of the members of the same family, who, long united by the ties of blood and affection, found it at last necessary to part, but with the kindest wishes for each other's welfare. Let it be such a separation, that, instead of alienating would strengthen the foundation of those feelings of mutual goodwill which arise from the considerations of family and blood.

Apart, therefore, from all consideration of the duty which interest, or commercial advantages, or power, or the consideration of patronage—a consideration which some honourable gentlemen had thought fit to introduce into this debate, notwithstanding that it was a consideration wholly unworthy to be mixed up with such a question—independently of all those considerations, he would say—Let the Canadas be ours as long as we are in a situation to retain them, and as long as their loyal population shall claim our protection; and if, in the course of time,—as who shall say that our connexion shall be eternal?—if, in the course of time, a separation should take place, let the countries which were once united, and which parted with regret, in the hour of mutual necessity, look forward to each other for support and assistance. Entertaining these views, he should certainly support the present vote. He hoped that the grounds of irritation, which he admitted existed in Canada, would soon be satisfactorily explained away. He thought that the Canadians had some

cause of complaint, particularly with reference to the allotment of the lands, which too much resembled a chess-board. He thought that, after forty years' possession, those millions of acres should be better allotted, and more advantageously cultivated. He felt assured that any irritation which might exist in Canada was but temporary, and that no wish was harboured there to shake off the control of England. He trusted that, when those works were completed which were the objects of the present vote, the peace and security of the Canadas would be placed upon a lasting foundation, and that they would never again become the theatre of attack and aggression.

NATIONAL DEBT—SINKING FUND.

July 15.

On the order of the day for the second reading of the Bill brought in by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, "to amend the Acts for regulating the reduction of the National Debt,"

Mr. Huskisson said, that he could not allow a bill which made so material a change, if not in the principle, at least in the mode, in which Parliament had hitherto dealt with the National Debt, to pass through the second reading, without entreating the permission of the House to be allowed to make a few observations upon it. He lamented exceedingly that, on a question of such great importance to the country, there had been an inevitable necessity which prevented it from being brought forward at an early period of the session, when the House might have entered into an ampler consideration of all the consequences which were involved in the change of the mode in which the management of the National Debt had hitherto been conducted. In the general view which his right honourable friend, the

Chancellor of the Exchequer, had taken of our finances and of our future prospects, and in the general opinions which he had stated to the House on those topics, he, for the most part, cordially concurred: but there was no opinion of his right honourable friend in which he more cordially concurred, than that in which he declared, that we ought to have no Sinking Fund, save that which was produced by the surplus of our revenue above our expenditure. On that point, indeed, he believed that every body was agreed. He lamented that the surplus of our revenue above our expenditure was not larger than his right honourable friend had stated it to be; for he thought it was desirable that a country holding the rank which this did in the scale of nations,—called upon as it occasionally was to assert its proud pre-eminence among them, and to maintain the balance of independence of smaller states,—should show not only an ability to make engagements in a time of war, but also an ability to fulfil them in time of peace. Though he was not prepared to quarrel with the proposed reduction in the Sinking Fund, yet he could not but think that a Sinking Fund of three millions was much too small, when compared with the debt, to the reduction of which it was to be appropriated. With this feeling he, of course, must be understood, as being strongly opposed to any reduction of the surplus applicable as a Sinking Fund, from three millions to one million and a half. He conceived that their first care should be to guard against an increase of the debt; and he was therefore for applying whatever surplus there existed to its reduction.

There was one part of his right honourable friend's speech in which he entirely agreed, and by which he had been greatly gratified. It was that in which his right honourable friend bore testimony to the value and advantage of those principles, relating to manufactures and commercial industry, which had been promulgated of late years,

and which, having been applied in the way of a remission of taxes, and in attempts to remove the restraints that fettered the industry of the country, had greatly contributed, according to the statement of his right honourable friend, to improve the general comfort of all classes of his Majesty's subjects. But he wished most particularly to state to the House, that, in his view, the Unfunded Debt of the country formed a part of its financial situation, to which a jealous attention ought to be paid, and which it was extremely desirable to see placed upon a more satisfactory footing. Taking all the circumstances of this Unfunded Debt into account, and connecting it with the present engagements and advances of the Bank of England,—he would not say, looking with a scrutinizing eye at the whole amount of that debt and of those advances, that he felt any present uneasiness, but he was satisfied that there was ground for prospective disquietude and alarm.

In 1819, during the consideration of the resumption of cash payments, they were told by the Bank of England, that it was necessary we should pay them the ten millions advanced by them to the Government upon Exchequer bills. The ten millions were repaid; but since then, more than that sum had been advanced by the Bank to the Government, and that in a manner which placed the money less under their controul, than when they advanced it on Exchequer bills; and under such circumstances as, should a case of emergency arise, would place the country in a situation of great difficulty, and possibly of eventual loss. In 1823, the Bank contracted with Government for what was called the Dead-weight,—that was the purchase of annuities to the amount of 585,000*l.* for forty-four years. Now, certainly, at the time this contract was made, it was the expectation, he did not mean to say of the Directors of the Bank, but of those who treated with them on the part of Government, and also the expectation

of the public, that the annuity so purchased by them would be gradually distributed and sold to the public. Otherwise the Bank keeping the whole of the annuity, and paying not less than 13,000,000*l.* during forty-four years, might as well have had its capital invested in land, houses, or in any thing else not convertible into the means of meeting other engagements. Had it been intended, on the part of the Directors, to keep the annuity permanently, the natural thing to have done was, to have called together the whole body of the Bank proprietors, and to have stated to them, that such was the nature of the contract, that it was an advantageous arrangement between the Government and them, and to have called upon them to advance the necessary capital. In that case, the public would have dealt with the Bank as with any other party who made an advance of money. But, as it was, instead of the capital being advanced, in order to make the payments to Government, all the Bank did was to lend its credit, without an advance of capital being made on the part of any of those who had a pecuniary interest in that corporation. Every one must see the difficulties which attended the Bank of England making advances out of its general credit, staked upon the property of the individual proprietors. The difference between such an advance and one on Exchequer Bills was very material. If the issue of these should become too large, the Government could pay off a portion of them; or if the Bank wished to get back its capital, it might claim payment from the Government. But here the public possessed no control over these securities; for there was no possibility of setting themselves free from any part of the sum, without the consent of the Bank. That body had advanced upon them about 11,000,000*l.* They were also largely in advance upon Exchequer bills. Their advances upon deficiency bills, up to the 8th of July, amounted to 8,000,000*l.*, besides something considerable on

the malt duties. The only description of advances in which the Bank was deficient, was that upon mercantile bills of exchange.

Looking at all these circumstances, and with the possible, though he hoped the distant, prospect of a change in the circumstances of this country, he conceived it was very desirable that they should not be placed in such a situation, that the Bank, in order to do justice to its engagements with the public, should be under the necessity of distressing the circulation of the country, or of taking courses which might be inconsistent with the maintenance of a metallic currency, and which might lead to that which he considered the greatest of all evils—the recurrence of a Bank restriction act. It was said, that some parts of the country would be distressed by a straitened circulation, in consequence of the calling in of the one-pound notes. He believed that no such thing would follow. He must at the same time say, that in the metropolis a plethora at present existed, arising from the difficulty of finding channels for the beneficial employment of capital. The Bank of England had actually at this moment deposits of money, for which it could not find any beneficial employment, amounting to upwards of six millions. It was well known that the several London bankers had large sums deposited with them by their customers, for which they could find no means of employment. Now, under such circumstances, if an unfavourable state of the exchanges should occur, and if this country were compelled to make pecuniary sacrifices in order to sustain the national honour, it might so happen, that these six millions of deposits would be withdrawn, and then, for self-protection, the Bank would be obliged to diminish its circulation. The consequences which would follow might easily be imagined. He was therefore of opinion, that the efforts of ministers should be directed, at the earliest possible opportunity, towards rendering the

state of the advances and engagements of the Bank of England more consistent with the safe principles of banking. In his opinion, of all the evils which had afflicted this country during the long period of a hundred years, the restriction of cash payments by the Bank in 1797, and the lamentable consequences by which it was attended, formed the greatest. He would say, that that act had produced more confusion in property, and had entailed more moral and political evils on this country, than had ever been produced by any other measure; and there was no sacrifice which the Government ought not to make rather than to bring back the distress, the suffering, and the whole train of frightful calamities which would attend its renewal.

Entertaining, as he did, such an opinion, he did not think it was a safe or consistent course for the Bank of England, with the engagements which it had to discharge, to have adopted those means of employing its capital in which it was now almost exclusively absorbed. Whenever difficulties should arise in the country, and when it would be vain to look for a restriction-act, these annuities, which might now be sold by the Bank, would be then productive of little or no relief; as it would probably be impossible to convert them, at such a period, into cash. A more disadvantageous plan could not have been adopted. In his opinion, the Bank of England in this instance had made investments of securities which no banker would ever have thought of investing permanently. In 1793, one half of the amount of the advances made by the Bank was employed in mercantile discounts. The Bank of France at this moment possessed a circulation of eight millions, and it employed more than one half of it in mercantile business. If the Bank called in its circulation by the sale of these securities, it would of necessity raise the demand for discounts upon bills of exchange, and it would be thus furnished with a safer and more legitimate mode of employing

its capital. He should be anxious to see the Government and the Bank concerting measures for a reduction of the present engagements of the latter; and if after that a demand for discounts did not arise, let the rate of interest upon discounting be reduced, and the demand would certainly follow.

Feeling warmly upon these subjects, he had deemed it necessary to give expression to his opinions regarding the expense attending our unfunded debt, and the great advances which the Bank had made upon securities to the Government. He thought that they confided too much in the easy way of carrying on the financial affairs of the country; by means of additions to the unfunded debt. The Exchequer-bills amounted to 34,000,000*l.*, and this year there were 2,000,000*l.* of deficiency bills to defray the bills from the Bank. Now, if they should be again placed in such a situation as that of 1825—which, by the way, was preceded by symptoms that could not be mistaken, and of the approach of which he had himself given more than one warning,—if they were again plunged into such difficulties, it would be vain for the Government to attempt to extricate itself by asking further advances from the Bank. The Bank would be safe, but it would be obliged to protect itself by contracting its circulation; and the result would be another panic throughout the country, followed by the same confusion of property, and the same lamentable consequences, that attended the panic of 1825.

AMERICAN TARIFFS.

July 18.

Mr. Huskisson said, that in submitting the motion of which he had given notice, he begged to assure his right honourable friends on the Treasury bench, that nothing

could be farther from his intention than to elicit from the Government any premature disclosure of their views and sentiments, in reference to the conduct of the United States, as bearing on the commerce and industry of this country. Neither was it his intention to state any specific opinion of his own on a subject of so much importance, though he felt it necessary to take some notice of, he would not say the intention, but the tendency of the acts which had lately been passed by the legislature of the United States: which he considered mainly detrimental to their own interests, and calculated to injure and impede the commerce of this country. Seeing the many other urgent matters that must have engaged the attention of Government, and looking especially to the circumstances attending the situation of the department to which the consideration of these subjects peculiarly belonged, it could not be expected that they had yet been able to give to the new American Tariffs all the consideration which their importance deserved. In 1815, very soon after the termination of the unfortunate war in which we had been engaged with the United States, a convention of commerce was entered into between the two countries for four years. This convention was renewed in 1818. The principle on which it was framed was very short and simple. It was one of those treaties which had been since so much abused, under the name of reciprocity treaties, and was the model on which other treaties were subsequently constructed. The principle was, that all articles of produce, trade, or manufactures, should be received in either country, on the payment of duties as low as were paid on the same articles by any other country; and that there should be no discriminating duty, with respect to the ships in which they were imported. This treaty or convention was concluded for ten years, and would expire on the 10th of October in the present year.

The policy of the United States was at first sound and

wise, and they had only laid on articles imported for the consumption of their population, such duties as were sufficient to provide for the exigencies of the state. The duties on the woollens of this country were 15 per cent., and those on our hardware and our cotton goods were even lower. In 1823, whilst the convention was still binding on both countries, they, strange to say, adopted a change in their tariff, imposing much higher duties on those articles which they considered the great staples of our manufacture. Hardware was taxed thirty and forty per cent.; cotton about the same; and, as if to give a proof of their intention deliberately to violate the existing convention, they raised the duty on rolled iron one-half higher than that on hammered iron; thus taxing even our improvements in machinery. Upon a remonstrance from this country, the executive government admitted, much to its credit, that no such increase of duty ought to be imposed, nor any duty laid on, in reference to the expedition with which it was forged.

Subsequently, an attempt was made to induce us again to enter into a commercial convention for another term of ten years. He had been the individual charged with arranging the renewal of the convention; and in the course of the discussions, he had taken two objections to such renewal. The first, that as the Congress had taken this course with the iron, there was nothing to prevent it from doing the same with the other articles of our exports to the United States, for instance, cotton goods;—that, in fact, if at all admitted, the principle would go to deprive us—a great manufacturing country—of all the benefit of our improvements in machinery. The second objection was, that the scale of duties on other articles had been attempted to be increased in 1824, 1825, and 1826, and was only rejected by the casting-vote of the President. He therefore proposed, that the parties should not be bound to a term of ten years, but

should conclude a new convention determinable at any period, provided twelve months notice were given by either party. This convention, leaving the two countries comparatively unfettered, was concluded last August. Whilst iron, cotton, and hardware, were rendered liable to duties which almost amounted to a prohibition, being the staples of this country, the productions of other countries were, in the same proportion, lowered; evidently showing an intention to injure, if not altogether to ruin, the extensive trade carrying on by this country in articles of its own manufacture. The fatal vote of this year was carried by as small a majority as it was lost by in the preceding year; and the best-informed Americans candidly confessed, that they felt this conduct to be extremely unwise and impolitic. Be that as it might, each country had a right to do in this respect as it liked, and we had no right to complain. He for one made no remonstrance as to the principle; but we had the remedy within ourselves. He was, however, not disposed to enter on a war of restrictions or prohibitions in commerce. He deeply regretted what had been done in this respect; yet a man must be blind to the interests of this country, who should consent to deprive Government of the means of promptly meeting the effect of such restrictive measures by corresponding regulations here. If we were not in a condition to vindicate ourselves, there was at once an end of all equality; nor could we account satisfactorily to other countries, with whom we were still allowed to trade on fair terms of reciprocity, for this tame endurance in injury. Neither was it consistent with the dignity of a great commercial nation like this, to sit in apathy and affect not to feel the impediments thrown in the way of its commerce. If we were to take raw materials for our manufactures from the United States, we certainly should ensure for our articles, when manufactured from those materials, an equally favourable reception in the market as they

experienced in other countries, not deriving in turn such considerable intercommercial advantages. Whilst we were dependent on that country for the raw material, were they to be encouraged and aided in their determination to be henceforth independent of our manufactured goods, of which they had till now required so large a supply? It was a more manly course, in order both to assert the character and protect the commerce of this country, to protest against a system framed for the unjust exclusion of our articles of manufacture. That system of commercial hostility he deeply regretted. There were two descriptions of articles imported into this country. Of the first class, such as tobacco, rice, and turpentine, he should speak as of articles which were not essential to our commerce or manufactures, and were mere articles of consumption. We could, he was satisfied, soon be abundantly supplied with tobacco from the East-Indies, by wise and prudent inducements held out to induce its improved cultivation. The rice of India would soon (indeed it was already doing so) usurp the place, in our list of imports, which that of Carolina had held. In other articles, the same change would soon be observed. With reference to cotton, that raw article so essential in our great staple trade, it was only necessary to give its culture in India the same encouragement and protection which the indigo trade had obtained, to ensure its cultivation with equal success, and the growth of as good, as durable, and as fine an article. The result would soon be, that the cotton of India would rival and supplant the cotton of the western world, as the indigo of India already excelled that of Guatimala, to which it was formerly so much inferior, and would still have continued so, but for the judicious encouragement afforded to it.

Unless we asserted our dignity and protected our interests, what would be thought of us by the people of Brazil, who admitted all our articles of manufacture upon a pay-

ment of only fifteen per cent.? What could we with consistency say to India, which was compelled to receive all our exports at a duty of 2½ per cent. on being landed in the ports of India, and had scarcely any staple wherewith to repay itself in the way of commerce with us? What, in fact, could be our answer to the new states of South America? This was an important consideration. But there was another; which was, that if the United States pursued this course, and drove us to countries for a supply now almost all their own, we should see that supply brought to this country in English bottoms and thus employing English industry, instead of, as it was now, employing American ships and seamen, and under the American flag. It was become a question of too great importance, any longer to be overlooked by any Government anxious to protect its commerce from the too palpable attempt to exclude the produce of English industry from the market of the United States. But was it to be supposed that the effort could be crowned with success; or was it not right to infer, that if, circumstanced as our provinces in Canada were,—so large a country as the United States were prohibited from obtaining a legitimate supply, human industry and ingenuity would devise means of obtaining at a cheap rate, and without duty at all, that which was so superior in manufacture to any other they could obtain? He should deeply regret if things turned into such an illicit channel, as it could hardly fail to increase the rivalry between the states bordering on the line of demarcation in North America, and possibly be productive of hostile feeling, and frequent personal rencontres. Strengthened as Government had felt itself by all these concurrent encouragements, it would not have become it to have acted otherwise than it did, with respect to the commercial convention last concluded. It appeared to him that the people of the United States had been led into an error, and induced to believe that we

should have regarded all this with comparative apathy, as coming from themselves; because this country had been so uniformly moderate and forbearing with an infant and rising state, connected with us so intimately by community of language and a common origin.

He thought that the present extent of our trade with America did honour to the spirit of enterprise in both countries; but if America should persevere in the system disclosed in the tariff of this year, the day might arrive when the commerce between her and this country might become as restricted, and as insignificant, as that between us and France. The commerce of America with this country amounted to more than one half of the whole of her commercial transactions with the rest of the world; but our dealings with America, though conducted on such an extensive scale, did not amount to one-sixth of our general commerce. He would leave it to those who had an interest in the prosperity of that country, to say, whether they would risk the loss of more than half her trade in the vain endeavour to impede us in one-sixth of ours. The rapid increase of the cotton trade between America and this country was a proof, not only of the general prosperity of both, but of the increased comforts which were possessed by every class of our population. In the years 1817 and 1818, one half of the cotton manufactured in this country was consumed at home. As the quantity of the raw material had doubled in the course of ten years, the inference was obvious, that the quantity of manufactured cotton had more than doubled. That was a great improvement in so short a period; and it was the more important, as it indicated a corresponding increase in the comforts, and he might say the luxuries, of the people. He hailed it as an evidence of the advantages which a long peace was calculated to diffuse over the face of the earth, that in the whole of the civilized world, the comforts and advantages of society were rapidly increasing. He rejoiced

to think that they were increasing in other countries as well as our own; for, as they increased, the wants of those countries would increase, with their wants commerce, and with commerce that beneficial intercourse which it must be the wish of every man to cultivate and encourage.

If the United States of America, by a fatal policy, should persevere in shutting out our commerce from her ports, it was absurd to suppose that she could annihilate that portion of our commerce. All she could do was to alter its course,—to send us into other ports of the same continent, to send us into Asia, and into the vast islands which covered the Asiatic seas.

To follow up the subject still further. He would say, that those gentlemen who, in another place, laboured with so much useless industry in the inquiry concerning the low price of English wool, were mistaken if they supposed that it was any proof of declining prosperity. The wool trade had decreased, because the cotton trade had increased. They were articles in competition with each other, and nothing could tend so much to raise the price of wool, as raising the price of American cotton. It was a satisfaction to know that the trade in foreign wool had increased. That was a fact which no man could deny, and as it was not accompanied with a corresponding increase in the export, it was decisive of an increase in the comforts of the people. The idea of laying an additional tax on foreign wool would be a species of madness, only equal to that which America would exhibit, by persevering in the system disclosed in the late tariff. On looking at the fourth report of the Finance Committee, they would find that a great increase had taken place in the comforts, as well as in the productive powers of the industrious classes.

It was with regret that he should make any allusion to the differences between this country and America, in the year 1825. But, what had occurred at that period between the

United States and the British colonies and the West-Indies? He had then proposed an act, throwing open the trade of those colonies, upon certain conditions, to other nations. The United States, however, so far from acting upon a principle of reciprocity, had imposed restrictions upon British shipping entering their ports, which amounted to complete exclusion. For one long year this country had patiently—he had almost said too patiently—submitted to the regulation, without adopting any retaliatory measure. At the end of that period, his Majesty was advised to issue an order in council prohibiting the intercourse between America and our West-India possessions. The intercourse was interdicted; and then came America, with a tardy proposal, accepting the terms which, up to the moment of the prohibition, this country had offered to her in vain. The advice for the issuing of that order in council was given with reluctance; but if they must again be driven to measures unfriendly to commercial intercourse, it became them to persist in it with firmness.

With respect to the present tariff, he would say to ministers,—"Do not be hasty to determine: look at the various bearings of the question, with a view to your interests, your character, and your trade." But if, after such deliberation, they were forced to adopt a course of retaliation, all he would enjoin them was, that when once they had adopted the course, they should adhere to it with firmness. He would now move, "That there be laid before the House, a copy of the Tariff established in the United States of America, in the present year; together with a copy of their Tariff of the year 1824."

The motion was agreed to.

KING'S SPEECH—MEASURE OF RELIEF TO THE CATHOLICS—GREECE—PORTUGAL.

February 6, 1829.

The Address of the House, in answer to the Speech from the Throne, having been reported,

Mr. Huskisson said, that in rising to trouble the House with a few words upon this important occasion, he could not refrain, in the first instance, from expressing the feelings of satisfaction with which he had listened to the eloquent and manly speech of the honourable gentleman who had just sat down.* The communication which had been yesterday made to Parliament by his Majesty's Government, considered in all its bearings, and looking to all its consequences, was, in his opinion, the most important and the happiest event that had occurred in this country, since the accession of the House of Brunswick to the throne of these realms. Standing in his place in that House, and having had the honour of a seat in it ever since the first agitation of the Catholic question, and anxious as he had been for the success of that great question, it was with infinite gratification that he found his Majesty's ministers recommending it to the deliberate consideration of the House, and announcing their intention of bringing it forward as a government question, and, of course, giving it all the just influence and means of persuasion which belonged to the executive of the country. It had gratified him, as it had gratified many of his friends, to find that the individual who now proposed this measure to the House, so pregnant with the most beneficial results, was the same individual who, from his first appearance in public life, had hitherto felt it to be his duty to give a sincere, a fair and honourable, but at the same time an uncompromising and decided opposition to this question.

* Mr. Dawson.

His right honourable friend, the member for the University of Oxford, in his speech, last night, had very properly abstained from going into any explanation of the details of the great measure now placed in his hands. But, looking at the communication from the Throne, and at the sentiments expressed by his right honourable friend, he was satisfied that it was to be a measure of grace. As such he trusted it would be received by those for whose benefit it was proposed; and he further hoped, that it would be ample, liberal, and adequate to the great and important purpose for which it was intended. It was for such a purpose and with such a view that he, and those who voted with him on this question, had uniformly recommended this measure,—with a view, to use the words of the resolution which they had so frequently carried in that House, "to strengthen the connexion between the two countries, to increase the stability and security of the Protestant establishment, and to diffuse happiness and concord amongst all classes of his Majesty's subjects."

He confidently hoped that such results would follow from the measure about to be proposed to the consideration of the House. At all events, it was a subject for congratulation, that the overpowering force of truth and justice, in this great intellectual struggle, had at length prevailed over what he might now be allowed to call long-cherished prejudices and errors. In the contest, which he hoped was about to be concluded for ever, they had been long engaged. It had been a severe and a protracted one. But every day and every hour, during which they had been occupied in this struggle, the cause had been increasing in strength, in proportion as it had been growing in importance; until at last it was admitted, that it could no longer be left unsettled, without endangering the safety of the country—nay, until it was distinctly admitted, that all further opposition to it must be unavailing.

In connexion with this subject, he could not but congratulate his noble friend,* on the gratifying fact, that the generous principles of liberality, that the true principles of religious liberty, were making a great and rapid progress in this country, and that, too, in quarters where such an event was to be least expected. Why! not two years had elapsed since his right honourable friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, had said in his place in that House, that he, for one, either in power or out of power, would strenuously oppose all and every concession to the Protestant Dissenters. But, in the very last session of Parliament,—and he stated it to his right honourable friend's honour—he assumed the character of a conciliatory moderator, with respect to that very question; and, with his sincere and effectual assistance, an arrangement was made, that was satisfactory to all parties concerned in the operation of the Test and Corporation Acts. He hoped that, in the present instance, his right honourable friend would be able, in the same manner, and with equal success—he was sure that he would act with equal sincerity—to accomplish the repeal of all penal laws and of all disqualifying statutes, which militated against the Roman Catholic subjects; and that he would devise such measures as would perfectly satisfy those for whom they were intended, whilst they soothed and calmed any feelings of apprehension that might be entertained by others.

The whole of the reasons stated by his right honourable friend on the preceding evening, which had induced Government to undertake the consideration of this question, were of the greatest importance. Whether with reference to the inconvenience and danger of a continued conflict of opinion between the two Houses of Parliament, or the baneful effects that must flow from a division of sentiment in his Majesty's councils, or the mischiefs which must be generated by differences in the Irish Government,

* Lord John Russell.

arising out of dissensions here; and, lastly, the important consideration, whether it was possible to form a cabinet on the basis of permanent resistance to the Roman Catholics,—all these points were brought forward with clearness by his right honourable friend; and, in his reasoning upon them, as well as in the correctness of the facts adduced, he thought they must all concur.

What his right honourable friend had said was perfectly in unison with the view which he himself entertained with reference to the Catholic question. There was nothing new in what had that evening fallen from the honourable member for Louth,* when he spoke of the Catholic Association. Speeches were last year delivered by the member for Kerry, and by the Solicitor-General for Ireland, all containing the inferences which the honourable member for Louth had drawn. The words were not precisely the same, but his honourable friends had put the same arguments, with respect to the influence of the Catholic Association. The danger of its existence to the country was by them most strongly urged, and the remedy was clearly pointed out. Now, why did he advert to these things? Why, merely to observe, that these representations having made a proper impression on the minds of Ministers, who had been hitherto opposed to any settlement of these claims, there were the strongest grounds for believing, that they were sincere in their determination finally to settle this long-debated question. Perhaps he might regret that those impressions had not operated sooner on the mind of his right honourable friend. He did not mean to say this with any of that invidious feeling which some gentlemen might attribute to the observation. He made the remark merely with reference to the importance of this question; for he would say, that if these impressions had been fortunately entertained before the present time, it might have been possible

* Mr. Leslie Foster.

that a lamented friend of his—whose unceasing exertions, whose splendid eloquence, and whose brilliant talents had greatly contributed to forward and mature this great question, both in Parliament and in the public mind—might, perhaps, in the dispensation of an all-wise Providence, have been spared to witness the triumph of his labours;—might have been enabled in that House to discharge those duties, in bringing his labours to a close, which now devolved on his right honourable friend.

He hoped his right honourable friend would not mistake the feeling under which he spoke. He was sure, after the statement which he had heard his right honourable friend make last year,—and in the sincerity of which, he, for one, entirely believed,—he was sure, after the sentiments which his right honourable friend then expressed, that he must have undergone a most painful struggle between his own personal feelings and the feelings of duty to his Sovereign and to his country, before he determined to pursue the course which he had happily adopted. In taking such a step, his right honourable friend had, no doubt, made a great public sacrifice; and he felt convinced that his right honourable friend could not believe that he had brought forward this topic from any unkind or uncourteous motive. Placed, however, as he was, before the House, he could not control this expression of his feeling. He looked forward to the future with confidence; and he entertained the most sanguine assurance, that the best results would be produced by the contemplated concessions.

The honourable member for Louth had said, that he was very much disposed to support views upon this subject which he did not formerly uphold in that House; and that he was inclined to do so from the confidence which he had in those who were placed at the head of the government; as their ardent feelings for the welfare of the Protestant

establishment led him to think, that it was better to place the question in their hands, than in those of any other persons, who might desire to bring forward this measure of concession. He was well aware of the warm attachment which was felt by his noble friend in another place for the established religion. He knew that his noble friend felt the strongest desire to insure the safety of that religion. But, while he admitted this, he must claim, for his right honourable friend now no more, and for himself, humble individual as he was, as great, as sincere, as powerful an attachment to the Protestant church, as any member of the establishment could possibly feel; and it was from a firm conviction, that the established institutions of the country would be more securely maintained by agreeing to these concessions than by opposing them, that he supported this question.

When he before stated his sentiments on this subject, he had observed, that, while he was warmly attached to the Catholic cause, he disliked the tenets and doctrines of the Catholic religion. Such was still his feeling; but he conceived that in legislating on this question they had nothing to do with those tenets or doctrines. But it appeared that within a very short time the tenets of the Catholic church had ceased to be regarded by many gentlemen with that horror which they heretofore excited. These gentlemen seemed to have been suddenly converted. He could only attribute to some natural cause—to some strange influence of the atmosphere not well understood,—the very numerous and important conversions that had taken place since that day week. He had no doubt, however, that one day or other they should have some better explanation of the cause which had produced such extraordinary effects. He had no doubt that the impartial pen of history would do full justice to those causes which had led to such satisfactory results. It was not for him to attempt an exposition of them, and he could only join with others in expressing

his gratification at witnessing results which were likely to confer so many and such lasting benefits upon the people of Ireland and of England.

With these feelings, he was disposed to give his cordial support to the Address, although it might contain some things which he could wish had been omitted. He was not, for instance, prepared to admit that the Catholic Association ought to be described as the cause of the discord and ill-will which, at the present moment, prevailed in Ireland. He begged not to be misunderstood. He fully agreed with that description of the Association contained in the Speech from the Throne, where it was spoken of as being inconsistent with the spirit of the constitution, dangerous to the public peace, and likely to obstruct every effort permanently to improve the condition of Ireland. It was, indeed, impossible to calculate the consequences which might ensue from the existence of such an Association, under different circumstances than those in which they were now about to be placed; but when they spoke of its creating and keeping up the ill-will which prevailed in Ireland, he must deny the correctness of the assertion. He would contend, that the Association was only evidence of the cause of ill-will, but was not the cause itself. In the language of one of the most eloquent advocates of Catholic rights, once the ornament of that House, but now deservedly elevated to the other,* he might say, that these perpetuations of discord and ill-will were "the spawn of our own wrong," and could only be removed by the removal of those causes which brought them into life. It was, indeed, much to be wished that the Government could have been induced to wait the effect of the removal of those causes, before they had determined upon any legislative enactment with respect to the Association, and that they had permitted it to expire, from the absence of a cause to give it excitement. But, be that as it might, he

* Lord Plunkett.

had an entire confidence in the good faith of the Government, and was not at all disposed to offer any opposition to the bill for suppressing the Association, although it might not at once be accompanied by a measure of relief to the Catholics.

He did not wish to obtrude himself any longer upon the attention of the House, and he should therefore merely observe, with reference to other parts of the Speech from the Throne, that the proceedings adopted towards Greece had his full and entire approval. He was satisfied that every thing which had been done in the East of Europe, in conjunction with our allies, had been done in the full spirit of the treaty of the 6th of July 1827, and that the exertions of the Government of this country had been unceasingly directed to the establishment of the independence of Greece, and the prevention of the unnecessary effusion of blood. He remarked, that the language used in his Majesty's Speech at the opening of the present session, upon the subject of the blockade of the Dardanelles by the fleet of the Emperor of Russia, was very different from the language used, in the last session, in the Speech delivered from the Throne at its close. At the close of last session it was distinctly declared to the House, that the Emperor of Russia, "had consented to waive the exercise, in the Mediterranean sea, of any rights appertaining to his imperial majesty in the character of a belligerent power." Now it was understood beyond all question at the time, that the Emperor had pressed his right to the exercise of this power, and that he had been induced to abandon it, solely on account of the urgent remonstrances of the government of this country. This he knew was the interpretation put upon the declaration in the Speech, and so it had been reported and considered by every mercantile man in the country; and he knew too, that the abandonment of this right was construed into a great boon obtained for our com-

merce by the successful interposition and remonstrances of his Majesty's government. In the present Speech, however, it appeared that his imperial majesty had "considered it necessary to resume the exercise of his belligerent rights in the Mediterranean, and had established a blockade of the Dardanelles." Now he did not see how these two passages could be reconciled. He did not think that a party, who had given a consent of this kind, was at liberty to resume his authority, without the consent of that other party, at whose instance, not six months before, he had announced his intention to abandon it. It might be said, that an objection of this nature was not very material; but he thought that every thing which concerned the honour and dignity of the country was of importance, and that it was very material to know there had been no departure from those principles, and from that course of policy, which our situation and our character bound us to maintain.

With respect to that part of the Speech which alluded to Portugal, he considered it as likely to give rise to very reasonable dissatisfaction. He could not undertake, with his present information, to pronounce any opinion upon the nature of the relations which now subsisted between the two countries; but this he might say, that forming a judgment from appearances, he could not possibly reconcile either our present position, or our past transactions in Portugal, with the honour and dignity of the Crown, or with that course of policy, which, under the faith of many treaties, had always placed Portugal in such close and cordial alliance with this country. He had no doubt that much of this admitted of full and satisfactory explanation; but he could assure the House and the government, that such was the light in which our conduct was viewed on the continent of Europe, by all those who had witnessed our forbearance to that person who at present filled the throne of Portugal; which throne he had ascended by one of the

foulest usurpations recorded in history; and it was not the least painful, or the least extraordinary part of that transaction, that the person who had violated all those treaties, was, at our intervention, placed in that trust which he had so foully abused. He did not mean to press this topic further; but he hoped that, for the honour and dignity of the Crown, and the reputation of the country, the affair would be fully and satisfactorily explained. Ministers might be placed in circumstances of difficulty: they might be able to show that they had done their duty, and yet they might, for a season, have sufficient reasons for withholding explanation; but, when the proper time came, the House had a right to expect that a full disclosure of circumstances would be made.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CLAIMS—MODE OF GETTING UP PETITIONS AGAINST.

March 3.

Mr. Brownlow having presented the general Petition of the people of Ireland, in favour of the Claims of the Roman Catholics,

Mr. Huskisson said, that considering the character of the petition, and the high rank, great wealth, and powerful influence of those by whom it was signed, he thought the honourable member who had presented it was called on to enter more fully into its subject than an ordinary petition would have required of him, and to direct to it the particular attention of the House,—a duty which he had ably performed, and to which the character of the individuals, and their extensive knowledge of Irish affairs, had the strongest claim. In all respects, this petition seemed a contrast to the English petitions which, night after night, were poured into the House from all parts of the country, in opposition to the views and intentions of his Majesty's ministers.

The petition before the House looked at the question as one purely of a political nature, as one essentially Irish; and it was in that sense alone that it had been introduced to the notice of the House by the honourable member. In the English petitions, as far as he could judge, the feelings of the petitioners arose from an apprehension on the ground of religion, rather than from a fear of political danger. He respected those feelings in the great body of the people, and he had no doubt that it was by working upon those feelings, that such a number of petitions had been obtained; because the people were led to believe that their religion was involved by the proceedings in Parliament. These, he admitted, were honest prejudices, and such as deserved the serious attention of the Legislature. He thought, however, that it was most important that those who were so active in getting up these petitions should, if possible, be prevailed upon to take a different course from that which they had hitherto pursued, and, instead of hawking them from door to door, and exposing them in public places to which large numbers of the lower orders were in the habit of resorting, call public meetings. There was, he was satisfied, no part of the country where there could not be found men of education, intelligence, and sound views on this question, who would attend at such meetings and allay the fears which were excited, by detailing what was the real state of the question. If such meetings were held—and he was sorry they were not,—men would be found who, instead of endeavouring to prove that this was a question between the Protestant creed and that of the church of Rome, would show that it was one of a purely political character; or that, if it were a question between the two creeds, the only way in which the Protestant creed could expect a triumph would be to open a fair field to each; for in that case the Protestant religion would most certainly be triumphant.

He had no hesitation in stating emphatically, that the measure of concession was inevitable. He did not mean that this necessity was physical; but he would say, that there was a great moral necessity for considering this subject, with a view to concession. He had heard much in that House and out of it, of settling the question; but he had never heard of any other measure which could bring it to a conclusion, except indeed, what had been intimated by a gallant officer on a former evening; namely, a direct appeal to the sword. That gallant officer, speaking of his constituents, had said, that their ancestors had once fought the Catholics, and that they themselves were ready to fight them again. With persons so heated, it would not be very useful to reason; but in that very state of feeling which showed one party ready to fight with the other, he saw the absolute necessity of concession. Another measure hinted at, and one in appearance more pacific, was to dissolve the Parliament, and appeal to the people. Dissolve the Parliament! Why, fortunately for this country, the Crown could not take such a step, without the concurrence of its responsible advisers. It would be insanity itself to suppose that the present ministry could advise such a measure; but if they did not, by whom could such advice be given? It would be insanity to suppose that, as public men, they could advise such a course;—especially after the honest and manly avowal of a change in their opinions on this subject, which had been made by the noble Duke at the head of the government, by his right honourable friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department, by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and by other influential members of his Majesty's Government. But then, if men of their opinions could not be found to advise such a course, would it not be still more insane to suppose that a set of men could be brought into the cabinet on mixed principles, with a determination to remain neutral? That would now be impossible. He had

no hesitation in saying, that the day of neutrality was gone by. It had lasted much too long; and he was glad that the time had at length arrived, when the Crown had taken it upon itself to give advice which would put an end to neutrality on this important question.

He would say, then, unequivocally, that an appeal to the people by a dissolution of Parliament was impossible. But though such a measure was pacific in name, would it be so in reality? He apprehended that it would be far otherwise. In the present state of excited feeling throughout the country—a feeling which must be still more excited by the stimulants of a general election—he could not contemplate such a measure, without the utmost dismay. In this view of the question, then, he would repeat, that the measure of concession was inevitable. The people of this country must make up their minds to it; and whatever might be the feelings of some on the subject, they should give way to measures by which much danger and confusion would inevitably be prevented. He would say, that it was the moral duty of every man, whether in that House or out of it, to exert himself to correct the mistaken opinions which were spread on this question, and not let it go forth uncontradicted, that the intended measures would have an effect injurious to the established religion. It was the duty of every man to show, that nothing was intended which could endanger the Protestant establishments in Church and State; but that, on the contrary, the object of those measures was, as their effect would be, to give greater security to all our establishments. By these means, we should, in a short time, find, amongst Irishmen of all classes, without religious distinction, that cordiality and union which existed amongst them every where but in Ireland; and that thenceforward, the animosities and heart-burnings which now made them a divided people would be completely buried in oblivion.

ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIEF BILL.

March 6.

Mr. Secretary Peel having moved, on the 5th of March, "that the House resolve itself into a Committee of the whole House, to consider of the Laws imposing Civil Disabilities on his Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects," the debate was adjourned to this day; when

Mr. HUSKISSON rose, and said:—

Although, Sir, I feel perfectly satisfied with the state in which this important question at present stands, and with the hands to which it is entrusted; and though I am unwilling to trespass on the time of the House, after all the discussion to which the question has been subjected, I nevertheless hope that the House will bear with me, for a few moments, on the present occasion.

Sir, my principal object in rising is to notice something which fell last evening from the honourable member for Dorsetshire.* But before I proceed to do so, I cannot forbear noticing an argument, as I understood it, which was introduced by the honourable member for the University of Oxford,† which appears to me so very extraordinary, that I almost think I must have misconceived the honourable member. If I have done so, it is but justice to afford the honourable member an opportunity of correcting the mistake which I, and probably the House, labours under; and if it should turn out, that I did not misunderstand the honourable member, I must acknowledge that it appears to me to be the most extraordinary position ever advanced in Parliament.

The honourable member referred, Sir, to the revolution of 1688, and, speaking of the measure now under the consideration of the House,—a measure which, at the commencement of a session to which we have been regularly summoned by the Crown, in the opening Speech from the Throne, has been recommended to our consideration—

* Mr. Bankes. † Mr. Estcourt.

the honourable member, in speaking of this measure, seemed to think that it was a question unfit for discussion in a Parliament so constituted, so called together and assembled for this direct purpose, under the declared authority of the Crown; and the honourable gentleman argues, that a convention, as in 1688, ought to be specially assembled to take this question into consideration. But, Sir, was the situation of the country in 1688, similar to its situation at the present moment? What was the first act of the convention of 1688? To declare the Throne abdicated and vacant. Was that a state of things in any respect parallel to the present? Certainly not. And I therefore must protest against the extraordinary position laid down by the honourable member, and maintain, that the present Parliament is competent to the consideration of every measure of foreign and domestic policy, and especially competent to weigh and to judge of the important measure recommended by the Sovereign to its calm and temperate consideration.

Having, Sir, listened with intense interest to the able, the perspicuous, the statesman-like speech of my right honourable friend last night, I cannot, as an individual, humble though foremost in the ranks in favour of this great question, deny myself the satisfaction of expressing the unqualified and heartfelt gratification which that speech afforded me. I listened with pleasure to every statement expressed by my right honourable friend; but never, since I have had a seat in this House, did I hear any minister of the Crown with half the delight that I heard my right honourable friend declare, that he founded the principle of the bill upon the abolition of all court distinctions, and the equalization of all civil, of all political, rights. And I must say, that my right honourable friend, in the measure which he has brought forward, appears to have acted in direct consonance with that principle and for that purpose —that the manner in which he has introduced it has been

straight-forward and open, and admirably calculated to effect the object he has in view.

I will say, further, that I felt the greatest anxiety, when my right honourable friend rose, to learn the manner in which this important measure was to be adjusted, now that it had been made, for the first time, a Government question. I was satisfied that my right honourable friend had considered the responsibility of his situation—that, looking to the measure which he was about to introduce with all the weight and authority of Government, he had well considered, and duly weighed, all the circumstances which were likely to require the attention of his sagacious mind, in reference to this question; and that he had fully examined whether there was any thing in the religious belief of the Roman Catholics, which rendered it necessary to apply to them any special restrictions on releasing them from their present disabilities. I am now happy to perceive, that in the measure proposed by my right honourable friend we have not to look for those imaginary dangers which have been so often spoken of, in the frequent discussions upon this subject; and that the measure is entirely freed from all the cumbrous machinery which has been repeatedly suggested, with a view to meet those pretended dangers.

And here, Sir, it is impossible for me not to say a word, in reference to a statement made by the honourable member for Aldborough; who, in discussing this question, has complained that no special securities have been provided for the established church. The fact is, that my right honourable friend, in the very words of his resolution, specially referred to the state of the established church. The honourable member says, that this measure will strip the established church of its firmest and best securities. But, Sir, has the established church, I would ask, no security in the constitution of this empire?—has it no security in the two acts of union—that between this country and

Scotland, and that between both countries and Ireland?—has it no security in the House of Lords and the House of Commons, and in the Throne itself?—has it no security in the public feeling and the affections of the country, and in the great body of the property and intelligence of the empire, which is firmly attached to it? These are the securities and safeguards of the established church, and if more be called for, I for one am prepared to say it is amply provided for already. I repeat, therefore, that my right honourable friend has introduced this measure in a straight-forward, direct, and honourable manner. I am glad that he has done so. I am rejoiced that Parliament, for the first time, is about to do an act of justice, without a drawback, to the undiminished loyalty and allegiance of the British and Irish gentry and people professing the Catholic religion. As far as the British Catholics are concerned, I am glad to perceive that, in the proposed measure of my right honourable friend, there is not a shadow, in the shape of security, which affects them. All the securities connected with the measure relates to Ireland, and arise out of the peculiar circumstances affecting that country. I am glad, that towards the Roman Catholics of England we are about to make that atonement which we ought to have made long ago, for their long-continued sufferings and multiplied wrongs. I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of bearing this testimony to their conduct and character, and of heartily congratulating them on the prospect which has now opened upon them.

I now come, Sir, to what fell from my honourable friend, the member for Dorsetshire. My honourable friend conceives, that we are placed in our present situation in consequence of the remissness of the Government in not having taken measures to repress the Catholic Association in Ireland, and to prevent the other events which have occurred in that country, and which have, in the view of the Government, but not in the opinion of my honourable friend, ren-

dered the present measures absolutely necessary. My honourable friend, in opposing the measures for the removal of the disabilities affecting the Irish Catholics, should bear in mind, that he wrongs the English Catholics also, for whose relief these measures are equally intended. As far as my political conduct is involved in the accusation which my honourable friend has preferred against the Government, I will explain to him the course which I have considered it my duty to pursue. My honourable friend says that, in the year 1825, we passed an act against the Catholic Association, and that, whether or not the Government were united on other questions—in reference to that act the cabinet was united and unanimous. I am ready to acknowledge that upon that Bill all the members of the Cabinet, in this and in the other House of Parliament, were perfectly united and agreed. That bill was passed; and now my honourable friend asks—if the Government found it ineffectual for the suppression of the Association, why did they not call upon Parliament for a stronger and more efficient measure? I would wish to recall the attention of the House to the circumstances of the year 1825, in reference to the great question which then, as now, engaged the attention of Parliament. The bill for the suppression of the Association was passed in the early period of the session of that year, and not without a decided and vigorous resistance being offered to it, and a strong discussion having taken place. The bill, however, was carried in both Houses, and became the law of the land. But, what was passing in the mean time in this country and in Ireland? That Association, against which the bill was directed, relying with confidence that the grievances of which they complained would be taken into the immediate consideration of Parliament, with a view to their removal, forthwith obeyed the law. The leaders of the Association being assured that concession was at hand, at once recom-

mended the discontinuance of the meetings of the Association; and they took every means in their power to enlighten the Committees of both Houses on the state of Ireland, with a view to the removal of the disabilities affecting the Roman Catholics of that kingdom. After the Association had ceased to exist, a bill for the removal of those disabilities was carried by a majority in this House. It was sent up to the other House, and there it was lost; and the consequence was, that the Association was revived. Now, Sir, here comes the consideration, whether it were possible, in the state of the public mind in England and Ireland at that time, to press a measure, such as my honourable friend says should have been pressed, upon the House of Commons, which had already carried a bill of concession, the loss of which had excited the greatest disappointment and dissatisfaction in Ireland, particularly after the sacrifice which they had offered to make of the elective franchise. In that situation of affairs, the Government might have come to Parliament and proposed a measure which would have been as effectual as any measure could possibly be; but, in thus suppressing the Association, it would have been necessary to do nothing more nor less than to entirely and permanently suspend the whole British constitution in Ireland. Does my honourable friend imagine that if the Catholic Association had been thus suppressed, there would have been an end to all discontent in Ireland? Does he suppose that it possessed no ramifications throughout the country, and that there would not have been means found for complaining, if the Association had been extinguished? If, then, a measure of that description had been passed, then, I say, that Ireland would have been in the state which my right honourable and gallant friend, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, has so well described. It would not have been in a state of civilized society, but private revenge and outrages on the law would have prevailed, from one end of the island to the other.

It has been, therefore, Sir, my firm determination, as far as I might be concerned in the councils of the country, that until Catholic emancipation was likely to be conceded, I would not lend myself to any measure that would be nothing more nor less than the total suspension of the constitution in Ireland. And let it also be borne in mind in speaking of the Catholic Association, that while it continued, peace generally prevailed: less crimes were committed in the country than at any former period; private revenge was no longer known; and public outrages had, to a great degree, ceased. Now, Sir, as long as peace was preserved, I was not willing to suspend the constitution in Ireland, without giving to that country any hopes of relief.

This is my answer to my honourable friend. I detest the Irish agitators quite as much as my honourable friend can do. I detest all parliaments, but the parliament constitutionally called by the King. I detest all exchequers but the King's exchequer; and I consider no collection of taxes to be consistent with the safety of the state, except that which is authorized by the law. The greatest danger in the situation of Ireland is, that its peace should rest upon any foundation but the protection and fear of the laws. But there exists in Ireland a power which can command the assemblage of multitudes, and which can control them when assembled. That power belongs to the Catholic Association; and the only way to put that down is by conceding emancipation. In the course of the last session, I expressed a hope, that we should grant emancipation as a boon while it would be received as a boon, and before the question should become one of parley and compromise, when it would cease to be received with gratitude. In the few months that have since elapsed, the dangers which then existed have rapidly increased; and it is therefore the duty of his Majesty's ministers, before the question shall become one of parley and compromise, to settle it, while it

may be granted and received as a favour. I would not require a higher authority than that of Mr. Burke, to justify the wise course which his Majesty's ministers have adopted. "If there is," says that great statesman, in his memorable speech on economical reform, "any one eminent criterion, which above all the rest, distinguishes a wise government from an administration weak and improvident, it is this—well to know the best time and manner of yielding what it is impossible to keep." There is no language in which I can better describe the wisdom and courage of Government, in at length bringing forward this great question, in order to its being satisfactorily adjusted.

With regard, Sir, to that part of the proposed arrangement which relates to the elective franchise, I own I do not approach it with the same unmixed and cordial approbation with which I regard the main measure itself. Abstractedly I must consider it as an act of positive injustice; and it does not appear to me to be one of indispensable necessity. This is my own opinion of it. But whilst I say this, I wish to defer to the judgment of persons who are so much better acquainted with the state of Ireland than I am, and in whose opinion such a measure is a desirable accompaniment of the measure of relief. Considering, therefore, the difficulties with which I am sensible this question is surrounded—knowing well the obstacles by which Government have been met, in the wise endeavour to adjust it finally and satisfactorily—being aware how desirable it is that the feelings of the Protestant part of Ireland should be consulted and satisfied — and assured, as I am, that there exists a pressing political expediency for passing the Relief Bill, I deem it right to assent to that for disfranchising the forty shilling freeholders, rather than, by resisting it, embarrass or impede the success of the other great and more important measure.

IRISH QUALIFICATION OF FREEHOLDERS BILL.

March 19.

On the order of the day, for the second reading of the Bill "to amend certain Acts of the Parliament of Ireland relative to the election of Members to serve in Parliament, and to regulate the qualification of Persons entitled to vote at the election of Knights of the Shire in Ireland,"

Mr. HUSKISSON rose, and said:—

I feel, Sir, as strongly as any honourable member possibly can do, the incalculable importance of the measure which, at three o'clock this morning, was carried by a triumphant majority. It has been stated to the House, in a manner which cannot be misunderstood, that that measure is indissolubly bound up with the present—that the fate of the one will decide the fate of the other. This it is, Sir, which increases the embarrassment under which I labour in delivering my sentiments,—an embarrassment which arises from my disapprobation of the principle of the bill, which goes to dispose of an elective franchise. I, at the same time, protest against the doctrine—and it is an unparliamentary way of discussing any measure,—that this House is not at liberty to make an alteration in the elective franchise. I cannot discuss the measure with reference to the present state of property in Ireland, as I am not acquainted with it; I shall therefore discuss it on the principle of right. If Ireland were a new country—if she had never enjoyed this right at all, and the question related to the establishment of the elective franchise—then I should not object to the limitation proposed to be introduced; for ten pounds would be a very good limitation if the House were legislating for a new country. But it is said, "You must look at the state of Ireland as connected with this proposition." Now, we are not at liberty to look at the question in that point of view. It must be well known to every honourable member, that it is a point of the

case, that the elective franchise of counties in Ireland is the same as those in England; that whereas forty-shilling freeholders in England obtained their privilege of voting about four hundred years ago, it was extended to those of Ireland a century later. When I state this, I mean to say, that a franchise so annexed and united to a freehold, for a period of three hundred years, is a property vested in the freeholder, to take away which is only one degree less a violation of right than taking away the property itself. Why do I state this? Is there any ground of law for this theory? Yes, Sir; a very high authority. Lord Chief Justice Holt, in speaking of the freehold rights of the people of England, says, "a freehold right is one which, if any person is in the slightest degree molested in the exercise thereof, he may defend by action;" and further, "a freehold right is a most transcendant thing; it is vested in and inseparable from the freehold: if it be separated, then the freehold is taken away." Then, Magna Charter itself contains a provision, that "no freeman shall be disseized of his freehold, or the liberties thereof, but by the judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land." Therefore, these freehold rights and immunities are most sacred, protected by the law of the country, and by the sanctity of three hundred years.

I am told, that this privilege has been more abused in Ireland than in this country. That, Sir, may have been the case; but I would ask, is it not your duty to endeavour to correct the abuse, instead of taking away the property itself? Is this the mode of proceeding which would be tolerated in this country? Is there no instance of such abuses in England? Honourable members may recollect the election in Middlesex some twenty years ago, and the scenes which then took place, when a mill at Brentford had been split into several hundred votes. Who had ever thought at that time of meddling with the elective franchise of the people of England? Let

gentlemen call to mind the elections for Westminster, forty or fifty years ago; and the perjuries, and corruptions, and bribery, and breaches of the peace which attended them. Yet, who ever thought of interfering with the elective franchise of the people of Westminster? I would ask any of the English members, whether, if any case occurred of an abuse in elections, they would not proceed to correct that abuse; or whether they would proceed to deprive the people generally of rights which were inseparable from their freeholds? It has been objected, that the votes in Ireland are not derived from property in fee. But how many tenants are there in England whose property is not in fee? In the place which I have the honour to represent, many of the electors hold only a life-interest in their property; and in many places—in Sussex, for example—votes are created by the purchase of forty-shillings a year of land-tax; which is not purchased for the profitable employment of capital, but solely with a view of obtaining the elective franchise. Sir, I cannot make up my mind to dispossess persons of their property, especially when the abuse—which is to be considered the ground of the measure—exists elsewhere. Vested rights of other descriptions are regarded. There is scarcely a professional adviser of the revenue board, who does not consider his emoluments as a vested right. No man laments more than I do the scene of perjury which is presented at elections; and I fully agree that it ought to be remedied. But when honourable members talk of perjury in Ireland, why have they not some feeling for the perjuries committed in corporations? The forty-shilling freeholders of Ireland may surely be entitled to a lenient consideration. Some of these individuals may not understand the true construction of the law. They may suppose, that as they would be unwilling to part with their freeholds for forty-shillings, they are therefore worth so much in the eye of the law; whereas, in

corporations and borough elections in England, a man will swear that he has not received a bride, whilst he knows that it is promised, if not received, and that it will be regularly paid, when the period of danger has passed away. On these grounds, I differed from the honourable gentleman who brought in the bill of 1825, which was prospective. I voted for that bill on its first introduction, but not afterwards. By the present bill, which is not prospective, all the proprietors of freeholds between forty-shillings and ten pounds, who have hitherto exercised the right of voting, are disfranchised, and thereby sustain an injustice only a degree short of the loss of their freehold.

Another argument in favour of the bill is, of all others, the least to be commended. It is said, that the people of Ireland are indifferent about this right—that the measure is not unpopular in that country. But, Sir, is it becoming in any government to take advantage of a season of enthusiasm, of an ebullition of gratitude, and to accept the surrender of an institution connected with popular rights? Such an argument is open to great objection; for if this House may so deal with the rights of electors, there is no knowing where it will end. I have heard it asserted, that this bill is a measure of parliamentary reform, but that it begins at the wrong end. Sir, I am hostile to all such reform, let the suggestion come from what quarter it may —whether it has reference to England, to Ireland, or to Scotland. I should give such a project my decided opposition; and, admitting as I do, from a sincere conviction, that the Catholic bill will strengthen the Protestant interests, I am of opinion, on the other hand, that parliamentary reform would not only destroy the Protestant church, but every other establishment. If the measure before the House solely inflicted inconvenience,—or even if it inflicted hardship and injury,—provided it fell short of actual injustice and the violation of legal rights, the confidence I place in

the Government, who are taking steps to pacify Ireland, would have prevented me from offering any opposition to the bill. But I cannot compromise the rights of the people, and consent to a violation of property. If I had happened to be a member of his Majesty's government, I might have seen reason to be convinced of the indispensable necessity of such an arrangement. The course which I think I should then have adopted is this—I should have endeavoured to prevail on those who are anxious for the measure, to make it prospective. It would have been only in the case of their satisfying me of the absolute necessity of it, to secure the success of the other, that I should have consented to it, in its present state. I should not have yielded, until the inseparable connection between the two measures had been demonstrated to me. I have lived, Sir, too long in public, and mixed too much in its affairs, not to know, that in such a complicated state of things, there may have existed some overruling necessity, to which ministers are forced to yield. Having, however, no means of knowing whether this necessity does or does not exist, and, on the other hand, being most anxious to do nothing which may, by possibility, seem to evince a desire to delay or impede the other great measure, I feel it proper, under this great difficulty, to abstain from voting at all. My resolution will, I hope, have no effect upon others. I have not suggested this course to others, and I do not wish others to adopt it; but, with reference to the injustice of the measure, and to the precedent it establishes, I cannot conscientiously do otherwise.

STATE OF THE SILK TRADE.

April 13.

Mr. Fyler moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the State of the Silk Trade." After the motion had been supported by Mr. Robinson, Mr. Baring, and Mr. Sadler, and opposed by Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and said:—I confess, Sir, that I have derived no small degree of satisfaction from finding that my right honourable friend and his colleagues have, after a careful examination of the subject, and of the various representations of the manufacturers and others concerned in the Silk trade, come to the resolution to persevere in the measure which it was my duty, when in office, to recommend for the adoption of the House. Nor has this gratification been materially diminished by the discouraging denouncement of the honourable member for Callington. Although that honourable member predicted, in 1824, the downfall of this trade, and now contends that the prophecy has been fulfilled, he nevertheless feels it necessary to prophecy a second time its reiterated ruin. In the same way he has seen the ruin of our trade in cotton and woollen inevitable, because from the high price of provisions in this country, it is impossible that foreigners should not supplant us in the market. Now, Sir, from recollecting what has happened with respect to America, the most enterprizing of our competitors in commerce, I see no reason to apprehend the fulfilment of this part of the honourable member's prophecy; for though, in the year 1824, America placed a protecting duty of thirty or forty per cent. on cottons, which, in 1828, was raised to seventy or eighty per cent., still she feels it impossible to maintain to herself the extensive supply of her own market. I say, Sir, when I see this, and know that the Americans are our most formidable com-

petitors, I cannot partake of the desponding feelings of the honourable member. I agree with him, that we have as much to dread from America as from any other country; but, if provisions are cheap there, labour is dear, machinery is costly, and other expenses are so great, that I have no fear that America will drive us out of other markets, much more out of our own, which is the position of my honourable friend. Some weeks ago we were informed, on the authority of the President of the Board of Trade, that it was the fixed determination of his Majesty's Government not to have recourse to the system of prohibition. When I heard of that determination, Sir, I felt it was my duty to attend in my place in this House to-night and to give my support to Government, in any further alteration which it may be found necessary to make, to carry into execution that system, which it is now agreed, ought to be held sacred.

Sir, the honourable member for Newark has exhibited his propositions, as if he had no wish to return to the system of prohibitions; but all his arguments went to show, that nothing but prohibition can save the trade from the difficulties and dangers in which it is involved. It is impossible that the House can enter into the consideration of any proposal not founded either on protection or on prohibition. It is protection which is proposed by my right honourable friend; but it is prohibition which is required by the throwsters and weavers. To this question there are three parties—the throwster, the silk manufacturer, and lastly, the public; certainly not the least interested or least important party in this question, but who, in the manner in which it has hitherto been argued, have been put out of view. The public are the great consumers of the article; they indulge in silk dresses and wear silks, from which I do not wish to see them desist, like the honourable member for Newark. I cannot see without

concern—not to use a stronger expression—the appearance of pride and self-conceit, which would think it a duty to forbid the lower classes from indulging in those luxuries which he would reserve for the higher. Sir, in a country like this, not divided into castes and tribes by rigid laws, I cannot conceive that it is right to forbid any portion of his Majesty's subjects those enjoyments which stimulate industry, and, while they contribute to the innocent gratification of the people, do not diminish the national resources. I, for one, must say, that I consider the public benefited by those facilities which place the enjoyment and luxury of a silk dress within the reach of a greater number of persons. What formerly cost twelve shillings may now be obtained for four, and this has brought the manufacture within the reach of a greater number of persons.

With respect to the throwster, Sir, I shall now examine what distress has been brought on him by the alterations in the law, effected since 1824. Before those alterations, he was protected by a duty equal to 14*s.* 7*d.* on thrown silk, and there being a duty of from 4*s.* to 5*s.* on the raw silk, he was protected to the amount of 9s. on the manufacture of his thrown silk. The honourable member for Coventry has referred to the situation of the throwster in 1824. In March 1824, the Government announced, that at the end of two years and a quarter the prohibition to import manufactured silk should be put an end to. In this declaration the House concurred, and the act for carrying it into execution was passed into a law. The throwsters, we were told by the honourable member for Callington, would be the first victims. He said distinctly, that he was satisfied his prophecy would be a true one, and that the capitalist would disentangle his capital from the mills. He would cease to employ his people, and they would be left to perish, for want of employment. What, however, is the fact? The average of the silk worked up by all the

mills of this country, for the years 1821, 1822, and 1823, was 1,947,000lbs. From 1824 to 1826, the throwsters knew of the change that was about to ensue in 1826; and they might have applied themselves, (having the benefit of my honourable friend's advice,) to remove their capital from the mills, and turn adrift their workmen. Did they do so? Though they were aware of this change, the quantity of silk they worked up increased from 1,947,000lbs., the average of the three preceding years, to 2,738,000lbs. in the two following years. They benefited then, by this change, very nearly one million of pounds a year.

It was in July 1826, that the act came into operation; so that we have only 1827 and 1828, as two complete years, to judge by; and what is the average consumption of silk in the silk mills of this country in those two years? Not less than 3,960,000lbs.; so that since the year 1824, the average has increased two million pounds. So much for the work the throwster has performed. I will now speak of the quantity of thrown silk imported. Before the alteration of the duty, on the average of three years, there were 355,000lbs. of thrown silk imported in the year. On the average of the two years after the change was announced, the quantity imported was 426,000lbs.; and since the duty has been lowered from 7*s.* 6*d.* to 5*s.*, the average of the two last years has been 476,000lbs.; so that the quantity imported since, compared with the quantity imported antecedent to, the lowering of the duties, has only increased a mere trifle. The results then of this are, that the throwster has had double the quantity of work; there has been no diminution of the quantity worked up before the notification; the throwster has not given up his mills; and his hands have not been thrown out of work. So much for my honourable friend's predictions.

According to the best information which I have been able to obtain, the expense of manufacturing thrown silk in this country is about five shillings; in Italy it is about three

shillings: making a difference of two shillings, while the English throwster enjoyed a protection equivalent to eight shillings. In point of fact, however, the duty operated as a bounty to the French smuggler, who possessed himself of all the advantages. A certain proportion of fine thrown silk is required for our finer manufactures, and this proportion it is necessary for us to have. There is a something either in the packing up of the silk, or in the distance from which it is brought, which renders it impossible to manufacture this finer kind of thrown silk here so well as it is done in Piedmont. It is therefore necessary to encourage the importation of this article to a certain extent, and it would render the measures of my right honourable friend still more effectual if he could find means to reduce the duty upon it.

But whilst I deny that the measures which I felt it to be my duty to recommend to the adoption of Parliament, in regard to this branch of our manufactures, have been attended with the ruin to the throwsters, which was so boldly prophesied, I do not deny that their own spirit of excessive speculation has plunged them into difficulties, and injured the weavers, by enhancing, through exaggerated competition, the price of raw silk. What has been stated by my right honourable friend is perfectly true. A great number of new mills have been erected, extensive and costly machinery has been put up, which, to return a profit, must be constantly at work; and to obtain that employment, a great competition ensued amongst the throwsters themselves. By their competition they raised the price of raw silk,—first to themselves, and afterwards they demanded a higher price from the weaver, or manufacturer. The excessive speculation of the throwsters operated, therefore, incidentally, as a tax on the weavers, and they had to suffer for the condust of the throwsters, as well as from their own.

I was surprised to hear from the honourable member, that from twelve to fourteen hundred thousand pounds of silk had been smuggled into this country from France, and that if we did not mind how we legislated, we should have two million pounds smuggled. Now, I believe the whole silk manufacture of France does not exceed three million pounds a year; and though the honourable gentleman here disposes of two-thirds of it, and at the same time states that France manufactures only for exportation, I can tell that honourable gentleman, that the people of France consume a great quantity of silks themselves, and that in that country the use of silk is not grudged to the lower orders. I believe the accounts of the quantity exported have been greatly exaggerated. It is true, as was stated by the honourable member for Callington, that the French set the fashion in silk; but what say the Spital-Fields weavers to this? One of the manufacturers stated, before the Committee, that he was glad that the French did set the fashion, for then a costly article was frequently brought into the country for the use of the higher orders, which the Spital-Fields manufacturer was soon enabled to imitate and bring it to market at a cheaper rate than the French article, so that it came into general consumption. Surely the honourable member, when he recollects this, will not give up the hopes of our manufacturers being able to keep possession of our own markets.

Sir, when those who were then the members of his Majesty's Government determined to put an end to the artificial system which had so long made this country the laughing-stock of Europe, they began with that part of the system of prohibition which was considered the most vicious. And what, I ask, has been the consequence? Why, by the removal of these restrictions, we are able to rival the most successful of all the nations of the Continent in their own productions. Without saying any thing of the

effects produced upon the morals of the people, or of those laws which were found necessary for the purpose of preventing smuggling, and which might almost be considered foreign to the rights and liberties of the people, I would just observe, that the whole of the seizures, at the time that smuggling was at its greatest height, amounted to little more than 5,000*l.* a year; so that it was absurd to say, that a system of prohibition could have any effect in preventing smuggling.

The honourable member for Newark has called the silk-trade an exotic; but I would ask that honourable gentleman, is not the cotton-trade an exotic? might we not, with equal fairness, call the cotton trade an exotic? We import it, as we import silk; we pay for one as we pay for the other. The equalization of the capital and industry of the country, so much insisted on by the honourable member, is unattainable, if the two exotics are not equally prohibited from, or equally admissible into, the British market. Neither is the honourable member correct in his view of the mode in which cotton is obtained by the domestic manufacturer; for that article is no exception to the necessary law of commercial interchange, by which the produce of the capital and labour of one country is exchanged for the produce of the capital and industry of another. If there were no other objection to returning to the vicious system of commercial prohibition, I should object to it, because we cannot go back in one article, without going back in others,—in woollens and iron for example,—from which we have removed the restrictions which impeded the domestic manufacture of those articles.

Sir, while I state this, I do not mean to deny that individuals have benefited by the prohibitive system, and have met with losses by the destruction of their monopoly. But the question for the House to consider is, not what may benefit or injure individuals, but what is calculated

to promote the interests of the community at large—not whether this single branch of industry or that single branch would be advantaged or disadvantaged by the repeal or reduction of a prohibitive duty, but whether all the other branches of industry would be benefited or injured by it? That, Sir, being the proper question for Parliament to consider, I confidently assert, that the changes in our commercial system which I have been instrumental in bringing about, however they may have affected this or that particular class, have contributed to the extension and culture of the general industry of the country. The very fact quoted by those who object to those changes proves my assertion. It has been stated, that commodities are to be had for one-third or one-fourth less now than in 1824. But what does this fact prove, unless that we can now procure an equal quantity of foreign produce with less labour, and that the difference is so much added to the capital and industry of the country, to be employed in other branches of commerce and manufactures? In what way can the extraordinary increase that has taken place in our internal consumption since the prohibitive system has been removed be accounted for, but by the increased facilities afforded of obtaining foreign produce, and the consequent addition to the capital and industry of the country? The phenomenon—for it is a phenomenon—can be accounted for upon no other principle. If we look to the extraordinary increase that has, of late years, taken place in the importation of the article of cotton, we shall see a striking instance of the extraordinary increase that has also, of late years, taken place in domestic consumption. If we look to the great demand for wool that has arisen within a few years, when not only more sheep have been reared in this country, and more British wool grown, but forty million pounds of foreign wool have been imported to meet the demand, we shall see a strong proof of extraordinary

internal consumption. If we look, in the same manner, to the increased imports and manufacture of iron, silk, and other articles, we shall see proofs of an immense internal consumption, that can only be accounted for by the fact of increased facilities, enabling us so to add to the capital and industry of the country, as to greatly enlarge the means of consuming domestic manufactures.

When honourable gentlemen assert, that the commerce of the country is in a state of decay, I beg leave to ask, where is the evidence to bear out their assertion? What do the official accounts say in relation to this alleged decay? I entreat the House to attend to one or two unquestionable facts. In 1827, the exports amounted in value to 40,323,000*l.*; in 1828 to 51,000,000*l.*; and to the 5th of January of the present year, to 52,000,000*l.*, shewing an increase of 12,000,000*l.* sterling in the exports of 1829 over those of 1827; and of 1,000,000*l.* over those of last year. Again, let the House look to the shipping interest, and they will see, that though the profits are not equal to those of the monopoly enjoyed by the British shipping trade during the war, that trade has nevertheless increased, while the foreign shipping trade to this country has rapidly diminished. The amount of tonnage of British shipping cleared outwards and entered inwards during the year ending the 5th of January 1828, was 27,700,000 tons; that of the year ending the 5th of January, 1829, was 31,003,000 tons; showing an increase of more than one ninth in the course of one year.

My honourable friend, the member for Callington, has alluded to the vituperation, to the endless obloquy, to the calumny, that have been heaped upon me, as the organ of the government, by which those changes were effected. I assure my honourable friend, that, when I felt it to be my duty to recommend the alterations that have been so beneficially made in the commercial and navigation laws of the

country, I clearly foresaw that I should have to encounter all the obloquy and vituperation which have fallen upon me. I knew that individuals and parties would be prepared to visit on me the sufferings brought about by their own indiscretion, or by other causes, over which I could have no control. But, while I clearly foresaw all this, I did not the less clearly see, nor the less forcibly feel, that I owed it to myself, as a member of this House, and as a minister of the Crown, to recommend a particular line of policy, however distasteful that policy might be to interested individuals, and however likely to give rise to misrepresentations of my motives. I felt that no man was fit to preside over the commercial interests of a great country, who was not ready to sacrifice personal feelings to the public benefit—that no man ought to be a British minister, who was not above all such individual considerations. Having felt this, I steadily persevered in what my conscience told me was my duty. Nor am I without my reward; for when I am told of the disadvantages which individuals have experienced from the changes which I was an instrument in introducing into our commercial system, I say in reply, that those changes have tended, more than all other events or measures, to impress the country and foreign states with just notions of the value of an unrestricted commercial intercourse, and with a conviction of the mischievous absurdity of commercial jealousies and attempts at commercial monopoly. The present wise system of commercial policy has inculcated an important doctrine in the pacific relations of one country to another, by shewing, that one state is not enriched by the impoverishment of another, but that mutual interchange of their respective produce is the only sure basis of mutual prosperity. It has tended, and will daily more and more tend, to prevent contests for objects of commercial selfishness—to avoid a recurrence of those wars which, in the

end, injure the manufacturing greatness of all the parties engaged in them. It has given rise to just notions of commercial intercourse with colonies, by putting an end to the petty rivalries in which those colonies hitherto had involved the mother countries. Is this mere assertion? Let the extraordinary fact in the history of the country—that for fifteen years we have enjoyed a commercial peace with the world—that, for the first time during so many years, Parliament has not been called upon by the Crown to protect with a naval and military force some colonial commercial right, or to resist some commercial outrage—answer the question! By the general principles of our present liberal system of commercial policy, we have disarmed other countries of their former usual resource of excluding our manufactures, by convincing them that they must, more than ourselves, suffer by a retaliation of their conduct. I will go farther and say, that if we had not altered our prohibitive laws, we should long since have been engaged in a mischievous war with some state equally blind to its own interests. The present repudiated free trade system, then, has not only tended to allay irritation and preserve peace to the colonies, but to prevent war with other nations.

The honourable member for Newark says, he will, at a proper opportunity, enter into a discussion on the principle of Free Trade. I shall not, therefore, anticipate that discussion, but shall only say, that whenever it takes place he will find me ready to meet him. May I, however, without entering upon the subject, ask the honourable member a question, which I have frequently asked in vain;—namely, what it is that he means by the term "free trade?" Will he tell me what object he wishes to see accomplished—what evils remedied—which the present system fails to accomplish or fails to remedy? What would he permit, or what would he restrict, in our commercial system, that is not now permitted or restricted?

Will the honourable member, instead of suffering himself to be led away by vague words, give us a definite meaning of the evils which he conceives to be involved in the phrase "free trade?" Will he tell us what is the system of its opponents? By acting on the principles of free trade, I understand that we ought to lessen or remove every restriction on our commerce, that tends to cramp the energies of individual enterprize, without benefiting the revenue. Those principles I have long advocated, and will continue to advocate; for I am satisfied by experience, that gradual relaxation of our restrictive system has been invariably followed by gradual improvement in our manufactures, our commerce, and our revenue. In those principles I trust my right honourable friend will persevere, despite of clamour, misrepresentation, and obloquy.

Honourable members say, that those principles tend to place the country in an artificial state. But is not, I ask, every country with which we are acquainted, in an artificial state? Is not the very institution of government itself artificial? Is not France, for example, an artificial country? Has she not debts to pay, taxes to levy—a police, an army, a navy, a court, a parliament—in fact, artificial institutions to maintain? In a word, must not every country be said to be in an artificial state, which is not shut up in itself,—dependent wholly on its own resources—without any interchange between it and other states—without, therefore, any benefit to receive or to bestow? The charge, then, of an artificial state is meaningless. I feel proud in having had a share in establishing a system of commercial dealing, which I am convinced is the most advantageous to the general interest of the country, that could have been adopted. By it the energies of the empire at large will be cultivated, its industry and capital most advantageously applied, and its resources placed in the most favourable condition for meeting the exigencies to which all great

commercial nations are exposed, and for which they should never be unprepared. And are we not called upon to foster and expand those energies, by every means in our power, when we look at the stirring intelligence, at the spirit of improvement, which now pervade France,—which are equally producing their effects in the Netherlands—in Germany—and in the United States of America? Shall we sit tamely by, while these countries are preparing and strengthening themselves for the race of commercial prosperity, in which they ambitiously hope to outrun us? I trust we shall find our security in our own vigilance and activity, and in the many superior natural advantages with which this country is blessed. It is impossible, Sir, as I observed on a recent occasion, for this country to stand still whilst every thing around us is in motion. Yet this is what the honourable member for Newark would seem to recommend. China, therefore, if I may judge from all that has fallen from him, would be his model of a perfect system in this respect; and indeed, Sir, some of the opinions which I have heard broached by the honourable member are so extraordinary, so theoretical, and so extravagant, that, if I did not know that the new member for Newark was an enlightened member of the great commercial community of Leeds, I should almost expect that, by some mistake, the electors of that borough had made choice of a mandarin from the celestial empire.

But, Sir, there is a country in Europe, of which the commercial policy, as far as it is founded upon any principle, or any example which I can trace, must be derived from China. There prohibition and non-intercourse is the rule, and non-prohibition the exception. The country to which I allude is the most favoured in soil, in climate, in the richness and variety of its natural productions, in situation, in the active spirit and intelligence of its inhabitants of any country in Europe. Well, Sir, see the

effect of this system? Is it to be traced in an overflowing exchequer, in a contented population, in the activity of its sea-ports, in the wealth of the owners of the soil, in a splendid aristocracy, in the exalted station which the country has taken among the great and independent states of the world? The reverse of all this is the picture of modern Italy. I allude to it with a sincere wish that the commercial policy of that country was placed upon a footing more conducive to its prosperity and power, and to its beneficent intercourse with other states. In condemning that policy, I do it with the more regret, as I cannot but state, that there never was an absolute monarchy more mild, less oppressive, more equable in its administration, than that of the House of Austria.

With respect to the motion before the House, I entirely concur with my right honourable friend, that the best way to preserve, and increase, and improve the Silk manufacture of this country, is to persist in the present policy of the Government.

The motion was negatived by a majority of 149 to 31.

EAST RETFORD DISFRANCHISEMENT BILL.

May 5.

Mr. Tennyson moved for leave to bring in a Bill, "to exclude the Borough of East Retford from electing Burgesses to serve in Parliament, and to enable the town of Birmingham to return two representatives in lieu thereof." Mr. Nicholson Calvert expressed his anxiety, that the franchise should be transferred to the hundred of Bassetlaw; and Mr. Secretary Peel stated, that if the honourable member should move an amendment to that effect, it should have his support.

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and said*:—

From the settled aversion which I feel to every system of what is called parliamentary reform, I cannot say

* From Mr. Huskisson's MS. notes.

that I hail with much satisfaction any question which brings, even indirectly, that subject more or less under the review and discussion in this House. I am as far as any man from courting any thing which looks like a general revision of the constitutional body: but when the existence of such abuses and general corruption as have been proved long and habitually to exist in the borough of East Retford are brought to light, and exhibited in proof before us, we have no alternative but to apply some remedy to the specific evil. Further than this I shall never be prepared to go. I take my stand upon the aggregate excellence of our representative system, and I leave to others to take what delight they may in hunting out the anomalies of its detail, having no desire myself to join in that critical examination.

Without intending the slightest disrespect to the honourable members who have preceded me, I must say it does appear to me, that a great part of the debate of this evening would have been better applied to a stage of this measure which I understand to be now gone by. The honourable member for Corfe-Castle* has addressed his arguments to the House, as if it were now considering the effect of the evidence which was formerly taken, and not as if it were considering what the consequences are which ought to follow upon that evidence. The honourable gentleman says, that in the courts of law you cannot institute any proceedings to punish bribery and corruption, unless you do so within two years of the period when the parties were guilty of that bribery and corruption. This House, however, is not placed in that situation. It is not so restricted in its jurisdiction. It has, moreover, decided on a former occasion, that in the borough of East Retford there had been a gross, habitual, and long-continued state of corruption and bribery. The only question, therefore, which we have to discuss is, in what mode we shall deal

* Mr. George Bankes.

with its forfeited franchise—whether we shall transfer it to some great commercial and manufacturing town, like Birmingham—whether we shall pursue the course which we pursued in the case of Grampound, when we transferred it to a county—or whether we shall retain this universally corrupt borough, and only endeavour to correct or countervail its corruption, by giving a concurrent right of voting to the freeholders of the adjacent hundred of Bassetlaw!

I have heard, Sir, with regret, and I must add with no small degree of surprise, the declaration made this evening by my right honourable friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, that the whole weight and authority of Government is to be put forth in support of the amendment of the honourable member for the county of Hertford. That, under such auspices, and backed by such power, it will be successful, I cannot doubt. I shall regret this success, because I cannot help thinking, that it will be at variance with the sentiments generally entertained by the sound and intelligent part of the community; I shall regret this success, because I am convinced, that it will increase, in the public mind, the feeling which already exists in favour of parliamentary reform; I shall regret this success, because I feel that it will ensure the adoption of a course, which must pave the way for a general parliamentary reform. When I say that I feel surprise, as well as regret, at the course which they have adopted, I will tell his Majesty's ministers what is the ground of that surprise. I had persuaded myself, from the conduct which they have hitherto pursued during this session, and above all from the arguments by which they have vindicated that conduct, that they were not insensible to the march of events, and to the state and progress of public opinion in this country.

See, Sir, what that march and that progress have been! Two short years only have elapsed since the honourable and learned member for Winchelsea,* to the great sur-

* Mr. Brougham.

prise of the country, thought proper one day to quit the seat which he now occupies, and, crossing the floor of the House, to take another upon one of the upper benches, behind the Treasury-bench. No sooner had this Leader of a party in this House—for upon this occasion he was followed by many others—effected this lodgment in an outwork, which had long been occupied and guarded by the steadiest and most tried of the troops of his opponents, than these veterans, one and all, were seized with a sudden panic—they fled and dispersed themselves in every direction, and in every part of the House. As soon as they had a little recovered from this state of breathless alarm, and had been able to talk it over among themselves, it was announced, that the foundation of all their fears was this —that the position taken by the honourable and learned gentleman implied a great change in the warfare of politics —that they inferred from the support which he was about to give to the other Leader on this side of the House, that three most alarming consequences were to be expected—first, they saw in it the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts—secondly, they saw in it the settlement of the Roman Catholic question—and thirdly, they saw in it nothing less than parliamentary reform.

Well, Sir, to their great surprise, the campaign of 1827 closed without any of those positions being either assailed or carried. At the opening of the campaign of 1828, the honourable and learned leader had evacuated his post on this side of the House, and had returned to his former position. New leaders were appointed on this side—leaders, of whom it might then be said, that had those situations been elective by those who had been thrown into such dismay last year, they would have been the objects of their unanimous choice, as the most approved champions to whom could be committed the defence of those two great bulwarks of the constitution, the Test Act, and the Catholic

code. In consequence, those tried and veteran troops resumed their former positions in the most entire—but, such is the uncertainty of all sublunary blessings, in a false and delusive—security. Whether the learned Leader, in crossing back to his former position, had left behind him the indefatigable chief of his staff, the famous "*Schoolmaster*" of whom he had often sounded the praise—by what arts he succeeded in winning over the chiefs and a great part of the garrisons—it will be the task of history to explore. The simple facts are, that one of those bulwarks was surrendered early in 1828, upon the first summons, and after a very feeble resistance; and that the second and more important fortress was surrendered at the opening of the present campaign, without even a summons, and upon conditions more favourable than any that had been offered, and offered in vain, by the succession of great commanders who had assailed it for the last five and twenty years.

I rejoice, Sir, at these surrenders; but Parliamentary Reform, thank God, still remains to be resisted. There, I trust, the resistance will ever be firm—will ever be successful. But sure I am, that the means of successful resistance will be greatly strengthened by our adopting the advice of the honourable member for Blechingly*—that it will be greatly impaired by our acting upon the plan of the honourable member for the county of Hertford. Should the latter proposition be adopted, we shall see parliamentary reform, backed by a powerful auxiliary out of this House—I mean public opinion, and the power of the press—made an annual question of discussion.

It is, Sir, on grounds like these, that I am anxious to give my support to my honourable friend the member for Blechingly. I will not condescend to argue the question as one between the landed and the commercial interests of the country. It is to me matter of wonder, that any man should even suppose that the character of the

* Mr. Tennyson.

House will be changed, by giving this franchise either to the hundred of Bassetlaw or to the town of Birmingham. I object to the distinction which some honourable members are drawing between the landed and the commercial interests. I contend, that the history of this country, and still more emphatically the history of Ireland, proves that it is on the co-operating industry and success of the commercial industry, that the prosperity of the landed interest mainly rests. Destroy the energies of commerce, and your land will soon fall into that unproductive state, in which it was before those great stimuli to improvement were created.

It has been stated, as a justification of the course which his Majesty's Government have determined to follow upon the subject of this bill, that the two Houses of Parliament are divided in opinion as to the best mode of dealing with forfeited franchises, and that the present has been adopted, as forming a middle course, on which both can agree. I admit it to be true, that on the present question, the two Houses are divided in opinion. The House of Commons has shown by its votes on more than one occasion, that it is of opinion that the great manufacturing towns which are unrepresented, ought to send representatives to Parliament. It has sent up bills in which that opinion has been formally avowed. The other House has rejected them; and, up to this hour, both Houses seem firmly attached to their respective opinions. Indeed, I understand my right honourable friend the Home Secretary not to be unfriendly to the principle which I am supporting; and therefore I am the more surprised to find him supporting the amendment of the honourable member for Hertfordshire.

Sir, many of the reasons which prevailed with those who had hitherto opposed Catholic concession, to give their support to it this year, would apply in the present case—here is the same division of opinion between the two Houses;

here, too, the young are with us, and the parties who, upon principle, oppose all transfer to great towns are the same, of whom it was said in another place, by a right reverend prelate,* they must soon go to their account elsewhere—and here again, the public feeling out of doors is strong in favour of giving representatives to these great towns, and strongly against giving it to the particular hundred to which this borough is to be annexed. We were also told, during the late discussions on the Catholic claims, now so happily adjusted, that it was important to win all Protestants to our side, in order that we might, with greater effect, oppose any dangerous pretensions, if any such there should be, of the Roman Catholics. And is it nothing, I would ask, of importance, in the course of the various domestic questions which may hereafter arise on the subject of parliamentary reform, to win over to our side, Sir, not only public opinion, over which the press now exercises such powerful influence, but also those congregated masses of intellect and of wealth, which always exist in large commercial towns? Will it be nothing of importance, I would ask, that the population of Birmingham shall have been made content, by being gifted with the power to return members to represent them in Parliament?

I should have thought, Sir, and more especially after recent events and recent avowals, that this was an occasion to recollect those words of forecast and wisdom, which are somewhere to be found in the writings of Mr. Burke,—"Early reforms are amicable arrangements with a friendly power; late reforms, capitulations with a conquering enemy." Is there no risk, Sir, that the measure which immortalizes the present session should appear hereafter an exemplification of this remark? Is it no drawback to an act of justice and grace, to have it exhibited as yielded to necessity, and as only a lesser evil than civil war? and if such a view of what we have done subtracts, on the one

* The Bishop of Oxford.

hand, from the value of the boon, does it add nothing, on the other hand, to the danger of the example? When the excitation of the late discussion shall have gone by —when the swell and rolling of the waters, after their late violent agitation, shall have subsided—that man must be little read in the history of human passions, or in the political history of free states, who can imagine that the people of this country, a sober, calculating, and observing people, or the people of Ireland, certainly quite as shrewd, though perhaps a little more mercurial in their character, will look at nothing but the mere change in the law, effected by what is called Catholic Emancipation, quite abstractedly from any recollection of the battles by which it has been won, of the mode and circumstances in which it was opposed for twenty-five years, and of the mode and circumstances and accompanying declarations, by which it was finally conceded; that they will look at the history of this question abstractedly of the influence which it has had upon party, upon the formation of and breaking up of administrations, and upon all the great events which have agitated the public mind in our time.

Sir, I say again—that man must be little read in human passions or political history, who supposes that some other leading question embodying the means of excitation, will not ere long take the place of the Catholic question; that new aspirations of ambition and distinction, will not arise; that feelings hitherto dormant will not be called into action; and that we shall not ere long be sensible of the vibration of strings which have hitherto remained untouched. Every thing connected with this question is hurrying us forward to good or evil, according to the direction which may be given to the stream. The present session, in fact, will become a new era in the history of the public power of this country. In this state of things, divisions between the House which represents the people and the Upper

House ought to be carefully avoided as much as possible. Because you have most wisely and most fortunately stopped the principal crater of that immense volcano, which threatened Ireland with wide-spreading conflagration, are you to neglect to look into the recesses of those subterraneous caverns where the elements of fire must still be enkindling, and the latent springs of danger preserved with all their elastic force. You have stopped the great evil—you have laid the foundation of much good. But it is rather the preliminary than the actual completion of a work—rather the qualifying to enable us to begin, than the end and close of our labours. In the present state of society in Ireland—in the absence of poor laws for that country—(upon the policy or applicability of which I now pronounce no opinion)—in the want of adequate capital to afford employment to an impoverished race—in the comparative relation of landlord and tenant—in all the various ramifications arising out of such a disorganized state of things, much remains unsettled. There is much, very much to be done by the Parliament and the Government, and many duties to be performed, in the reconciliation of supposed adverse interests.

Now, Sir, is it possible to glance at the proximity of these difficult questions, without seeing how much they must be aggravated by the disfranchising of this borough of East Retford, for the mere purpose of transferring the franchise to the adjoining hundred of Bassetlaw? My honourable friend, the member for Hertfordshire, was indeed so well convinced of this himself, and so entirely persuaded of the universal corruption which reigned throughout the borough, that, in his first bill, he proposed to disfranchise the whole of these corrupt voters *en masse*, and throw open the franchise to the county. He has since, however, forgetful of his first and juster intention, merely changed the form of election in the borough, and extended it to the

hundred of Bassetlaw. [Mr. N. CALVERT.—"You mistake. I did not bring in a bill of that specific description. I brought in two bills; one for the disfranchisement of those who were guilty of gross bribery and corruption; the other for transferring the franchise."] Then, the tenderness displayed in the alteration is not justice, in the general principle which ought to govern such a case. It is creating, or rather superinducing, embarrassment where none previously existed; for the case originally, and indeed at present, is simply this:—we were, as the committee had left the subject upon the facts, at perfect liberty, more than parliament had been on any previous occasion, to disfranchise East Retford, and to carry the franchise so forfeited to any part of the country we thought proper. The moment that, upon just grounds, such a decision was come to, I know nothing in the history of the constitution, in the precedents of our former proceedings upon the like grounds, in the analogy of the decisions upon any cases appertaining to such principles, which attaches a preference in the transference to mere vicinity or proximity, rather than to any other part of the kingdom. This being the fact, whence, Sir, the policy of overlooking the claims of such a town as Birmingham, with a population of one hundred and forty thousand souls, to bring in some local hundred—with the palpable knowledge of Birmingham, the great quarter of a staple of the country—iron—being unrepresented in Parliament; at the same time knowing, likewise, Leeds the great mart of the woollen trade, to be in the same state, and likewise Sheffield, the depository of the Hardware trade? Is this a time, when such a question is raised, to decide, that Birmingham shall not be represented at all, and that a forfeited franchise shall be assigned to one of the hundreds which was represented directly by the county members, as well as indirectly by the borough members. So that in the hundred the electors are to have the exercise of the repre-

sentative functions twice, and to have a twofold capacity of returning members, while the large towns, with the great interests which I have named, are to be deprived of the chance of a single nomination. Ought any man in his right senses to hesitate as to the course which it is proper to adopt under such circumstances? If Birmingham ought to be represented at all, ought a question to be raised upon the alternative, whether such shall be the case, or whether a hundred in the county, like Bassetlaw—one emphatically named in the local topography as "*The Dukery*," shall have the chance of being directly represented? It is a matter of indifference to me in whom the nomination shall lie, in such a case; it is enough for me, upon the general principle to know, that the county of Nottingham has now eight representatives, and that Warwickshire, the depository of great trading interests, has only six, with a population so much denser and more conflicting, and, under every circumstance, so very differently constituted.

Why, Sir, there has not been for a century so good an opportunity of remedying a state of things, arising out of the altered condition of society. It is unnecessary to go into the condition of these boroughs in Nottinghamshire, and the interests involved in them; nor do I mean to trench upon the principle of virtual representation. I am not arguing against that principle, when I seek for the settlement of the present question. But I contend, that if great and influential interests have silently grown up in the country, mixing private speculations with large public results, the principle of virtual representation becomes inapplicable to their immediate condition; and that, when a safe opportunity arises, their direct claims ought to be attended to. When the power of selection is pressed upon Parliament by any particular occurrence, what answer can be given to the claims of such a town as Birmingham, with trading interests largely mixed up in the general commercial bear-

ings of the manufactures of the country? When such measures as the renewal of the Charter of the East-India Company, and that of the Bank of England, are in progress, is it to be said, that the people of a town like Birmingham have no greater interest in the result than those who reside in the hundred of Bassetlaw? Are they, at a time of such general and momentous considerations, to be consigned to a mere virtual representation, and refused the benefit of a just and seasonable opportunity of having a direct presence in the legislature? No class, in fact, more directly requires this aid than the people of Birmingham; who are now to be refused it, notwithstanding the eminent advantages which the country could not fail to derive from the pursuit of a different course. Indeed, when I survey those weighty interests, and the incalculable benefits that would result from the concession now called for, I cannot help appealing to my right honourable friends on the Treasury Bench, and recalling to them the apposite and beautiful quotation lately made by a noble friend in the other House,* at the head of the law, who repeated it as it was used by a great luminary of this House —Mr. Burke—when describing the benign effects which had resulted from the adjustment of the ill-proportioned representation of Wales,—"From that moment, as by a charm, the tumults subsided—obedience was restored; peace, order, and civilization followed in the train of liberty —when the day-star of the English Constitution had arisen in their hearts, all was harmony within and without." By pursuing the policy of the act of Henry VIII. in the present case, the same happy consequences would follow—the same guarantee would be obtained for the loyalty of a patient and enduring people. These great advantages are now within your reach. Never before have you had an equal opportunity of effecting so desirable an object, so readily, and so quietly.

* Lord Lyndhurst.

My honourable friend, the member for Hertfordshire, alluded to the boroughs in the west of England, and remarked how well they worked. Upon this point, I will offer nothing more than that I know enough of these matters to wish to avoid discussing them in detail. After all, Sir, the question is—has, in the particular instance before us, that degree of forfeiture been incurred by bribery, which justifies the total disfranchisement of the borough? It is not necessary, in the fulfilment of the principle which governs these transactions, that each individual shall, in the pursuit of what he conceived to be his private interest, have violated his public trust;—it is enough to show, that the general corruption is so notorious in the body exercising the franchise, that they do not deserve to be invested with public rights. Their franchise becomes, in such a case, vitiated. In fact, there is no other way of dealing with the principle. We must act upon the general condition of the place.

I know, Sir, that in enforcing these opinions I am exposing myself to the repetition of the imputation of having been of late governed very much by revolutionary theories. I have been charged by some, whose esteem and goodwill I greatly value, as having, in matters of commerce, as well as in those of the general policy of the country, been too prone to alterations, and as being the author, in some instances, and the promoter in others, of innovations of a rash and dangerous nature. I deny the charge. I dare the authors of it to the proof. I am ready to join issue with them, whenever it is brought forward in a substantive, tangible, and intelligible shape. For the present, I will content myself with reminding those gentlemen, when they talk of the dangers of innovation, that they ought to remember, with Lord Bacon, "that Time has been and is the great Innovator." Upon that Innovator, I have felt it my duty cautiously to wait, at

a becoming distance, and with proper circumspection; but not arrogantly and presumptuously to go before him, and endeavour to outstrip his course. Time has raised these great interests; and it is the business of a statesman to move onwards with the new combinations which have grown around him.

This, Sir, is the principle by which my feelings have been constantly regulated during a long public life, and by which I shall continue to be governed, so long as I take any part in the public affairs of this country. It is well said, by the most poetical genius, perhaps, of our own times—

> "A thousand years scarce serve to form a state,
> "An hour may lay it in the dust"—

This is the feeling which has regulated—which will continue to regulate—my conduct. It was by a reference to it, that I governed myself in the great measure which has recently occupied the attention of Parliament; verily believing that if, in an evil hour, the Government had resolved upon a permanent, uncompromising system of resistance to the Catholic claims, they would have gone far to illustrate in this country the last words of the quotation—"An hour may lay it in the dust."

I claim therefore for myself, that I have never been one of those who think that, in order to warrant any change in the established policy of the state, it is sufficient to show that the change is in accordance with natural rights, or founded upon some general principle, the abstract truth of which cannot be denied. At the same time, I do not mean to deny, that when we come to that which is the practical duty of statesmen,—to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of one course of proceeding against another, and to make our choice between them,—it will generally be found, that the balance will incline on the side of justice

and of sound principle. But I go no further. I am no advocate for changes upon mere abstract theory. I know not, indeed, which is the greatest folly—that of resisting all improvement, because improvement implies innovation—or that of referring every thing to first principles, and to abstract doctrines. The business of the practical man is to make himself acquainted with facts—to watch events—to understand the actual situation of affairs, and the course of time and circumstances, as bearing upon the present state of his own country and the world.

These are the grounds, by a reference to which his reason and judgment must be formed—according to which, without losing sight of first principles, he must know how to apply them, and to temper their inflexibility. This is the task of practical legislation. We cannot frame new laws, or change those under which we have hitherto lived, without a reference to the situation of the country, and to all the circumstances in which we are placed. But neither, as some appear to imagine, can we stand still, whilst those circumstances are changing, and every thing around us is in motion.

Now, Sir, the surest way to prevent rash and dangerous innovation is to stop that course of vacillation, which temporising and incomplete measures are sure to create. In every thing which I have said, I beg the House to bear in mind, that I am not pressing for the adoption of any theory, unknown to the constitution; but, on the contrary, enforcing the practical application of a very old principle, and endeavouring to show how completely it is in unison with it, that means should be taken, safely and without forcing the occasion, to provide for the wants of those great towns, which have grown up under peculiar circumstances, and which call for a course of treatment, more consistent with their exigencies, than the one now provided for them.

The House divided. For the motion, 111; against it 197. Majority against bringing in the bill, 86. Mr. Huskisson voted with the minority.

POOR LAWS IN IRELAND.

May 7.

Mr. Villiers Stuart moved, "that this House is of opinion that it will be expedient to take into early consideration, in the next session of parliament, the condition of the Poor of Ireland, with a view to consider the propriety of introducing a system of Poor Laws into Ireland, subject to such modifications as Parliament may deem applicable to the peculiar circumstances of that country." Upon which, Lord Francis Levison Gower moved, and Mr. Secretary Peel supported the previous question; not meaning thereby to express any hostility to the motion, nor intending to pledge the government upon it, either one way or the other.

Mr. HUSKISSON said, he should also vote for the previous question, because he agreed with his right honourable friend, that it would be most inexpedient for the Government to pledge itself to any course on this subject; since it might create unfounded expectations, both in the minds of the landlords and of the poor. Until the details of a plan had been prepared, after a full consideration of all the difficulties, he thought it would be premature for the Government to make any pledge whatever. And even when those difficulties had been fully considered, he should say of this as of the Catholic question, that it could not be better left than in the hands of the Government.

The evils of the present state of Ireland, as they affected England, were greater than they had been represented to be. Not only did the influx of Irish labourers diminish the price of labour in this country, but the children of Irish parents, by their birth in this country, acquired a settlement, and thus added to the burden of the poor-rates. Not only the west and north-west, but every other part of the country, was affected more or less by these evils, and the true remedy for them would not be found merely in the introduction of poor-laws into Ireland, but in the introduc-

tion of that feeling of security which would invite and retain the employment of English capital in that country. It was that feeling of security which had occasioned the greatness and wealth of this country, and which alone could produce similar effects in Ireland. Parliament should well digest some plan, and prepare all the details, before they pledged themselves to any principle. If they neglected this too long, all the hopes which had been entertained as to the benefits to be expected from the settlement of the Catholic question would be disappointed.

The motion was withdrawn.

EAST-INDIA COMPANY'S CHARTER—CHINA TRADE—PETITION FROM LIVERPOOL.

May 12.

In pursuance of the notice he had given,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and said:—*

Although, from a consideration of the paramount importance of the subject, and from courtesy to those honourable members of this House who are directly connected with the interests to which the petition which I hold in my hand refers, I thought it right to give notice yesterday of my intention to present it, yet I can assure the House that I am not now about to provoke a discussion upon the question; the more regular consideration of which will come on upon the motion of my honourable friend, the member for Bridgenorth, on Thursday.

At the same time, Sir, I feel that I should not be doing justice to those of my constituents, who have placed this petition in my hand, if I did not shortly state the substance of it, and the grounds upon which they approach the House. There are many honourable members who

* From Mr. Huskisson's MS. notes.

must recollect the enquiry which preceded the last renewal of the East-India Charter, in 1813. They will recollect that, upon that occasion, the manufacturing and commercial interests of this country applied for a relaxation of the exclusive privileges of trade which the East-India Company then enjoyed to all the British territories in India, and generally to all other countries and seas within certain latitudes to the eastward of the Cape.

An enquiry, Sir, was gone into, and the result, I think, may briefly be stated to have been to this effect.—That persons of the greatest intelligence, observation and discernment, who had spent the greatest part of their lives in India, and in the service of the Company—(and there is no public service which has produced a greater proportion of able and distinguished men)—it is sufficient for the present to name among the number the late Mr. Charles Grant and the late Sir Thomas Munro—gave it as their decided opinion, that the relaxation prayed for by the merchants would be attended with no increase of commercial intercourse between this country and Asia. They stated, that the wants of the natives were so simple and so few, their domestic habits and pursuits so uniform and unvarying, their individual and social existence so regulated and constructed by their religious feelings, and the productions of their own country so ample to satisfy all their wants, that any attempt to introduce the manufactures and productions of Europe among them would be unavailing, and that those who were anxious to make the attempt were only courting their own loss and disappointment.

It was further stated, that all experience accorded with this view of the subject. The Company had existed for more than two centuries. It had all the advantages which private traders could not expect, of local knowledge, able agents, and political authority; and yet it had never been successful in introducing British goods into the

consumption of India. The history of the trade between Europe and the East-Indies from all other countries, and at all times, seemed to confirm this view of the subject. It was a trade of which the course had been uniform—Europe had been supplied with certain productions and manufactures of the east, and for want of other modes of payment had uniformly paid in return, not with other goods and manufactures, but with gold and silver. This had been the uniform stream of commerce, from the balmy days of Venice and Holland; and such it would continue in all future time.

Well, Sir, such was the case against opening the trade. The British merchants could not but recognize the great weight of the living authorities that were opposed to them—the yet greater weight of all historial authority. But still they did not despair. They said to Parliament—"Allow us to make the experiment. Let us, at our own risk and cost, see what can be done by the most inventive and ingenious, the most industrious, the most active and enterprizing people on the face of the earth, to overcome the obstacles which apathy, and prejudice, and the inveterate habits of so many centuries, may oppose to the introduction and use of the conveniences and comforts which it is in the power of commerce to afford to the population of India." Parliament, in some degree, granted their prayer. The trade, subject however to many impediments, regulations, and vexatious restrictions, was partially opened, from the month of April 1814. It has consequently been open now for fifteen years—a space, let me observe, which, in the existence of an individual, scarcely completes the period of infancy; but which, for the promotion, the growth, the developement of a commercial intercourse between two great divisions of the world, can scarcely be considered as more than the first hour of its birth.

Now, Sir, how has this commerce succeeded, from 1814

up to 1828? In 1813, the whole amount of exports, to the countries east of the Cape of Good Hope, amounted to something more than 1,600,000*l.* Last year, they amounted to 5,800,000*l.*, which was equal to one-eighth of the whole of the exports of this country to all parts of the world. The experiment has been beneficial also to the shipping interests of the country. In 1812, there were employed in the trade with India 28,000 tons of British shipping. In 1828, no less than 109,000 tons were employed. I think, therefore, that the views of our merchants and manufacturers have been completely realized.

I have stated, Sir, that before this period, the returns from England were habitually made in the precious metals, and that the commerce with India must therefore have necessarily been confined, on account of the small amount of the returns we were able to make. This experiment, however, has effected a total change. The commerce is not now limited by the small returns we could make, those returns being almost entirely in the precious metals; but the difficulty now is to find returns from India to Europe. A very material consideration, therefore, in the view of this question, now is—how far the trade will not be restrained by the difficulty of procuring returns from India.

The petitioners likewise state, that this extension of commerce has affected not merely our manufactures, but has included the mineral wealth of the kingdom, and that there have been large exports of iron, copper, and of other articles of a similar kind. The petitioners, however, complain of want of returns, and state, that indigo affords the best. The petitioners request the special attention of the House to that part of the trade with the east which is carried on with China. It is obvious, that whatever political reasons may bear upon the intercourse between this country and our possessions in India, there are no such special considerations with respect to our intercourse with China.

Except for political reasons, China ought not to be excluded from intercourse with this country. The commerce of China, however, is exclusively monopolized by the East-India Company; and if that monopoly is to be retained, it must be, not on political considerations, but for some other reasons. The petitioners complain,—and I think with reason,—that, in 1813, when the House greatly relaxed the restrictions on the trade with India, it took the opportunity, whether intentionally or inadvertently,—he thought inadvertently,—of drawing tighter the Company's monopoly of the trade with China. This part of the subject the petitioners wish particularly to be brought before the House, thinking that a remedy may be applied to it before the expiration of the Company's Charter.

To make this part of the subject intelligible, I must state, that all the charters granted by the Crown prior to that of King William, contain a clause, that if the trade so monopolized should be found disadvantageous to the Crown, the charter may be terminated upon two years' notice. Afterwards, when the Charter was granted by Parliament, it was granted for periods of twenty or twenty-one years, but there was always some regard paid to the British consumer, and to the people of this country, especially in the article of tea. By a reference to the act of 1745, the House will see what checks and securities had been provided by the legislature. That act, in order that the quantity of tea might always be sufficient for the consumption of Great Britain, and to keep the price of that article on an equality with the price of it in neighbouring countries, made a provision that, in case of such inequality in price being manifest and considerable, the Lords of the Treasury should be at liberty to grant a license to any other persons, whom they might think proper, to import tea from the continent of Europe, for the purpose of producing an approximation of the prices. Thus, then, there was a power

of keeping down the price of tea; and this provision lasted until 1813, when it was enacted, that no persons other than the East-India Company, or persons having the license of the Company, should be allowed to import tea from any place to the United Kingdom. The result of this has been a considerable change in the price of tea in this country. Tea, on the Continent, sells for little more than half the price it fetches here; and when the Lords of the Treasury were called upon to grant a license to others to import tea from the Continent, they found that the power was taken away from them, and that the monopoly was exclusively in the Company.

In another part of the petition there is, with respect to the trade with China, a very singular complaint. It states, that all foreign ships, and all subjects of foreign countries, are allowed to carry on trade with China with the productions of this country, and from the ports of this country, and to go from China, with their return cargoes, to any part of the world but Great Britain. Now, the merchants and the ship-owners of this country think it extremely hard, that they alone shall be excluded from a trade in which the Company do not participate, and by their admission to which the Company consequently cannot be in the least degree injured. I am told that, in the last year, eleven ships of the United States came into the Thames, were loaded with goods of this country, and carried them to China; where, having found a very profitable market, they went with their return cargoes to any part of the world they pleased; except, of course, this country. Now, Sir, it is rather humiliating to our pride, that English ships should be excluded from this trade; not because their exclusion is a benefit to the Company, but merely because they happen to be English ships, and to be navigated by English subjects. In the Committee on Foreign Trade some years ago, this subject was adverted to, and it was

admitted, that no prejudice could result to the strictest monopoly of the Company from allowing British shipping navigated by British seamen, to engage in this trade with China.

On all these points, Sir, the petitioners claim the attention of the House; and I think I have stated enough, more than enough, to prove the success of the partial experiment of 1814—enough, more than enough, to induce the House to receive favourably the prayer of this petition. Sir, let me ask them to shew this favour, on another and a higher ground than that of the commercial and manufacturing interests. I mean, Sir, the moral improvement, the increased comfort, the advancing civilization, of the millions committed to our care and superintendance in the Peninsula of India. Let us recollect, Sir, that it is by conferring these benefits that we may atone for, if we cannot justify, our extensive conquests in that part of the world. Let us recollect that we cannot stimulate their industry without at the same time multiplying their means of enjoyment, and enlarging their sphere of happiness and moral worth. Let us recollect that it is by these means that you may hope to reconcile the feelings of a people to a foreign yoke, and to preserve, in a manner beneficial to both, the connexion which now exists between the countries. These, Sir, are the considerations upon which I recommend this petition to the attention of the House, and I beg to add, that my constituents are unanimous in their feelings on this subject.

The petition was ordered to be laid on the table, and be printed.

MR WHITMORE'S MOTION FOR A SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE STATE OF THE EAST-INDIA AND CHINA TRADE.

May 14.

Mr. Whitmore having moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the state of the Trade between Great Britain, the East-Indies and China," it was opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, nevertheless, expressed his readiness to enter upon the inquiry at an early period of the next session. After which,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose. He assured the House, that after the excellent speeches which it had just heard, he should not trespass long upon its attention. He agreed with his right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that this was a question not only of the highest importance to the commerce and manufactures of this country, but also a question involving interests far higher than those of mere commerce and manufactures. It was a question of difficulty in many considerations, also, under the notice which the law had rendered it necessary to give to the East-India Company. It was a question also, the decision of Parliament upon which would involve the happiness, the tranquillity, the moral and the physical situation of the millions of subjects who in that country looked up to us for protection. All these considerations rendered it necessary that the House should proceed to inquire into the subject with a full consideration of the awful responsibility which would rest upon it, for every decision which it might make upon the different bearings of this great question.

He felt thankful to his right honourable friend for the assurance which he had given to the House, that this inquiry should be gone into fully, fairly, and deliberately, at an early period of the next session. He also felt thankful, that there would emanate from that quarter, from which it was always fitting that such information should emanate, a valuable mass of documentary information to guide their inquiries. At the same time he must say, that notwith-

standing the speech of his right honourable friend, he could not see that there was any reason which should prevent us from entering into inquiry at the present moment. If we were to appoint a Committee now, these advantages would arise from it: first of all, the members of the Committee would be forced to know how serious, extensive, and important was the duty imposed upon them. They would have all the advantage of the recess to direct their studies, so as to enable them, if the Committee were renewed in the next session, to discharge in a more efficient manner the duty devolved upon them by the House. It had been stated, that among the questions which that duty would call upon them to decide, were those connected with the happiness of India, and with the security of our possessions in that quarter of the globe—questions of settlement, questions of commercial policy, questions of civil policy, in all the different views in which the Administration of a great empire could be considered. Considerations like these imperatively called upon Parliament to look into this subject; and, therefore, if they were to begin their inquiry into it at this early period, even admitting that they were not bound to come to a decision before the close of four years, they would not be able to conclude it if they conducted it properly in the course of the next session. It was an inquiry more complicated, more various, more extensive, than any into which the House had ever yet embarked. He was sure that there would be no dissatisfaction in the country if the Committee were now to sit for a month—if it were then to report, that it had commenced its inquiries, that it had sent queries on important points out to the East, and that it had called for a mass of documentary evidence, which could only be procured from a distance, and if it were then to recommend to the House to consent to its being revived in the next session.

Whilst, however, he stated that the appointment of a Committee this session would be productive of such ad-

vantages, and not only of such advantages, but of this further advantage, that it would be an intimation to all parties who feel an interest in this question, as it affected both the commercial prosperity of this country and the well-being of India, that Parliament had determined to direct its attention to it, and a formal invitation to them, if they had any information to give, to come forward and give it,—he was not inclined to undervalue the importance of beginning the inquiry in the ensuing session of Parliament. He should be satisfied, if, on an inquiry of such importance, the subject should be brought forward by those who were responsible for the administration of England and of India—he meant by members of the Government—under the direction of the ministers of the Crown, and in conformity with the course which they recommended as the most efficient. For these reasons, he would not enter more at present into this extensive question, especially as he knew that it must be discussed hereafter.

Thinking, also, that all questions relating to the future political administration of India should be carefully distinguished from those questions which were mixed up with the commercial pursuits of the East-India Company, knowing that all the interests of the country were involved in difficulty, and must be well weighed before the House could decide that no settlement, or no colonization should take place in India, (and, on that point he would say that there must be some change, if we did not wish to lose India,) —looking at the character, the habits, and the prejudices of the natives of that vast continent, he would now content himself with saying, that we could not apply to it the ordinary principles of colonization, nor deal with it as with a country which we occupied for the first time. Matters like these must go through a Committee; and he would even add, that the judgment of the Committee upon them must not be considered as binding upon Parliament.

For his own part, he would confess, that so far as his inquiries and reflections had gone, he could not see the possibility of reconciling, to the degree which he could wish, the commercial interests of England with the administration of the political affairs of India by a Company of merchants, who were engaged in the commerce of the country, over which they exercised sovereign rule. He thought that the principles of commerce, as they affected private individuals, must be interfered with and destroyed, if private individuals were obliged to compete with rivals, enjoying the power of sovereignty, and possessing twenty-five millions of revenue from their commercial and territorial acquisitions. How they were to relieve themselves from this difficulty he could not tell. All that he could say at present was this, that it did appear to him, the more they separated the commerce of India from its sovereignty, the better would it be for the interests of all parties engaged in that commerce—the better would it be for the advancement of civilization in India—the better would it be for the great interests of the people of India,—and the better would it be for the interests of the people of England, the consumers of the produce which India supplied, and the producers of the articles in which that produce was to be paid for. For if the East-India Company were carrying on their commerce to the injury of individuals, as it had been confidently stated that they were, that injury must ultimately fall upon the people of England. Therefore it was, that he wished to give to commerce a greater expansion than it had at present, and to rescue it from competing with that monstrous anomaly of commercial enterprize and sovereign power united in the same corporation.

He was particularly desirous that the inquiry should be commenced as early as possible. He wished it to be distinctly understood, that though he thought there was great evil in the present state of things, he did not think

it arose either from the conduct of the East-India Company, or from that of the Directors—to whom he owed, and for whom he felt, all possible respect, and who had exerted the greatest talent for the benefit of those whose interests they were selected to protect and to promote—but that it arose solely from the anomalous nature of the system itself. There was one point on which he must say that he could not agree with his right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. His right honourable friend said, that it was useless to enter upon any inquiry in this session, and that there was no indispensable necessity that it should take place even in the next, as the charter of the Company did not expire till the year 1834. His right honourable friend had likewise stated, that on two former occasions, when the renewal of the Company's charter had been under consideration, the inquiry had taken place only one year before its expiration. He thought that if, on the present occasion, the inquiry should be commenced at an early period, and should be prosecuted to a conclusion as soon as possible, it would satisfy the House, the country, and the Directors of the East-India Company too, that it was for the interest of them all to make an alteration in the present Charter, at a period previous to the legal termination of the present bargain.

He was of opinion that, if a committee were now appointed, the question of a more extended intercourse between this country and China might be settled at an earlier period than the year 1834. Let not gentlemen, when they looked at that part of the question, deceive themselves. If we neglected to follow in the track which was now open to us—if we left foreigners to occupy for years a market into which we might, but were not allowed by law to, enter—if we let the industrious classes of Chinese deal with America for commodities, which they would at present as willingly take from us—if we prohibited, like-

wise, all commercial intercourse between China and Sincapore, that glorious instance of the immense advantages derivable from Free Trade—it might, perhaps, be too late for us to alter our policy, when the Charter of the East-India Company had expired. In the years which must elapse between that time and the present, others would have engrossed that trade, which might now be ours; and therefore he said, boldly, to the House of Commons, "Seize the advantages which present themselves to your grasp, even now—whilst you yet can." Look, too, at the new world. The troubles of the states of South America could not continue for ever. They must subside ere long under a settled form of government; and then their intercourse with the east must be very considerable. Their situation on the coast of the Pacific was advantageous for trade with all the Archipelago of the Indies. At present they were without any commercial marine. The means of carrying on the intercourse between South America and China would be seized by the merchants of other states, if we failed to avail ourselves of it. The United States had already got a good deal of the carrying trade; and if we suffered three or four years to pass without doing any thing, it might be productive of incalculable mischief to the position which England had to maintain in the east.

He therefore contended, that the question ought to be taken up at as early a period as possible, and especially on those points which were only connected with a part of the Charter. It was not a matter of indifference, that the House should show to the merchants and manufacturers of England, who were now labouring under great depression, that this was a question to which it was alive, and that it was looking to a satisfactory arrangement of it, as soon as it could be made with due attention to vested rights and interests. He was satisfied that if inquiry were granted, we should be able, before the expiration of the present

Charter, with the assistance of the East-India Company, to make some satisfactory compromise; so that a new system of trade might start up in the place of the old one. That system was clearly defective. In the year 1793, when the renewal of the Company's exclusive privileges was under discussion, it was stipulated, that three thousand tons of the Company's shipping should be set aside for the merchants of England, and they were set side accordingly. The condition on which this trade commenced was a payment on the outward-bound cargo of five pounds per ton, and on the import cargo of fifteen pounds per ton; and yet this condition, severe as it now appeared, was deemed at the time to be a considerable advance towards a better system. On the renewal of the Charter in 1813, we obtained an indefinite power of increasing our trade with India, as far as it could be extended. Since that time it had been extended very considerably; and therefore it was not theoretical to assume, that if the House proceeded in the course of relaxation, our trade with India would go on increasing the benefits which the country already derived from its connexion with India, securing the tranquillity and prosperity of that continent, and promoting the welfare of all parties who were engaged in its commerce.

He felt these considerations so strongly, that he did hope that the points which related to the political arrangements to be made hereafter respecting India would not stand in the way of the commercial intercourse, so interesting to the merchants of England, and so likely to prove beneficial to the civilization of India. He would not, however, advise his honourable friend to persist in his motion, after the promise which had been given by his right honourable friend. At the same time he must say, that he was not at all sorry that this discussion had taken place, as he considered it calculated to do much good.

The motion was negatived without a division.

MR. CHARLES GRANT'S MOTION FOR THE REDUCTION OF THE SUGAR DUTIES.

May 25.

In a committee on the Sugar Duties Bill, Mr. Charles Grant moved as an amendment, that the duty on British Plantation Sugar be reduced to 20*s*., that on East-India Sugar to 25*s*., and that on Foreign Sugar to 28*s*. per cwt., with an ascending scale for those of higher value. After the proposition had been opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose—He said he agreed with his right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the sugar question should not be viewed solely in relation to the West-India planters, but as it bore upon the various interests of the country. It should be looked at with reference to the East-India trade, to the commerce and navigation of the country, and to the interest of the public at large. But in supporting the amendment of his right honourable friend, he was not trenching upon the West-India interest. On the contrary, he was convinced that that proposition would promote and assist the West-India interest, equally with every other interest of the state. The question was not a particular one, bearing upon one trade or interest only. It was, and should alone be considered as, a general question. It was as such that he had treated it two years ago, when it was proposed to reduce the duty on East-India sugar, and when he promised to take an early opportunity of bringing the whole question before the House. His right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, fully agreed with him as to the principle, that all the interests involved in the question should be brought under consideration together, with a view to their being newly adjusted—but added, that there was one obstacle upon which he felt it to be his duty to urge the postponement of such a consideration; namely, the interests of the revenue. His right honourable friend seemed to appre-

hend, that the proposed reduction would lessen the revenue by 500,000*l.* annually—saying, that because the revenue derived from the sugar duties amounted at present to five millions, it should always be five millions. Now, he could not take upon him to say positively how much or how little the revenue might be lessened by reducing the duty, but he contended, that the increased consumption consequent upon that reduction, and the increased life which would be given to the commercial and shipping interests by the opening of new channels of trade, would benefit the public at large, far more than the reduction could possibly injure the revenue.

The next point he begged leave to touch upon was the observation of the honourable member for Rochester, that he believed that the balance alluded to by his right honourable friend, and which his right honourable friend stated to have been made up of foreign sugar inadmissible into the British market, was paid in bullion. He begged the honourable gentleman to recollect, that he had that very day presented a petition, in which it was stated, that out of seventy thousand tons—a balance of foreign sugar obliged to be taken by the petitioners—only five thousand found their way into this country, owing to the present law. Now, if this law were amended, sixty five thousand tons more would, in one instance alone, have been warehoused, and afterwards refined, thus giving employment to those who had none, and affording a profitable out-lay of British capital. In fact, this country might be made the entrepôt of the sugar of the world, and might give large employment to its unemployed capital and operatives, in refining that sugar for the markets of Europe. If such were the case, how fine a field for the profitable out-lay of capital would the refining of our own East-India sugar afford! Indeed, he knew of no new channel in which capital might be more beneficially expended in this country, than in refining sugars for the European markets, if

the business of refining were duly encouraged. Such was the confidence of foreigners in the British manufacturers and merchants, that we should become the sugar refiners of the world. It was, therefore, a very short-sighted view of the subject to resist the reduction, on the ground of its possible injury to the revenue.

Then, with respect to the benefit which a reduced price, consequent upon a reduced duty of sugar, would confer upon the working classes of the community, a simple statement would, he thought, place the subject before the committee in a clear and striking light. In consequence of the present enormous duty on sugar, the poor working man with a large family, to whom pence were a serious consideration, was denied the use of that commodity; and he believed he did not go too far when he stated, that two-thirds of the poorer consumers of coffee drank that beverage without sugar. If, then, the price of sugar were reduced, it would become an article of his consumption like many other articles, woollens, for instance, which he now used from their cheap price, and which he formerly was unable to purchase. This was the principle that regulated the amount and extent of consumption,—the article being not placed by its high price beyond the reach of the working classes, the large majority of the people. When spirits had become cheaper than beer, the former were consumed, and the latter fell into comparative neglect; and so of cotton and other commodities, now, from their low prices, in general use as the clothing of the working classes. Indeed, he had been told that the woollen artisans of Leeds were clothed in cotton, the latter being so much cheaper.

Then, as to the non-protection of the West-India trade, of which an honourable member complained, he could only say, that if the East-India sugar were admitted at a bounty of ten shillings, instead of the duty of twenty-five shillings, proposed by his right honourable friend, that body might

have some reason to complain, but certainly not till then. The West-India interest need not complain, for they need not fear any injurious rivalry. As it was, all Europe and America were free to trade in East-India sugar, and yet they took very little of that article; thus proving how groundless were the apprehensions of the West-India merchants, that the admission of East-India sugar into the British market, on something like equal terms with their own, would injure their interests. Even when the West-India sugar was open to foreigners, their trade in it was trifling, for the article came to the best market, the British, because it was and must be the best. By the treaty of capitulation, Demerara, for example, was free to send her sugar to the Dutch; and yet none of it ever went to Holland, all coming, as he had stated, to the better market, this country. We gave the West-India colonies the best return for their commodities; that is, we afforded them the most profitable market for the employment of their capital; we gave them the longest credit; in a word, we gave them the best terms, and commanded their produce. And these very advantages, with the pecuniary engagements arising out of them, preventing but few West-India planters from being wholly dependent on the British merchant, would in themselves prevent, at least for some time, those changes in the West-India trade which some honourable members apprehended. As he was satisfied that the general subject could not be put off for more than one or two sessions, and that in it were involved the public interest, the commerce, and the navigation of the country, he would intreat the Chancellor of the Exchequer not to postpone the consideration of so important a question to an indefinite period. There were two points which he begged leave to notice before he sat down. It had been stated by some honourable members, as a kind of hardship to the colonists, that they were compelled to consume British manufactures. But those honourable

members seemed to forget that, for the very same reason, all the world was compelled to consume British manufactures, —because they were the cheapest and best. Again, honourable members complained that the landed interest possessed a monopoly in the making of spirits, from which sugar was prohibited; but barley had been proved to be the best and cheapest material for the distillation of spirits, therefore it was no unjust monopoly in favour of the landed interest to give it a preference over sugar; which, moreover, was never had recourse to for the purposes of distillation, but in seasons of scarcity of corn.

The committee divided on Mr. Grant's motion: Ayes, 60. Noes, 98.

SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH'S MOTION CONCERNING THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ENGLAND AND PORTUGAL.

June 1.

This day, Sir James Mackintosh called the attention of the House to the recent attack made by an English ship of war off Terceira, and moved for copies or extracts of Communications concerning the Relations between this country and the Queen of Portugal. Mr. Secretary Peel having signified the intention of Government to grant the said papers,

Mr. Huskisson rose and said:—*

I must preface the few observations which I wish to submit to the House on this motion, by declaring most unequivocally my entire conviction, that his Majesty's Government, in all their foreign policy, are actuated by a sincere but rational anxiety for peace—an anxiety in which I yield to no man—not only to maintain peace where it now happily exists, but to restore it in those parts of the world where hostilities now unfortunately prevail. This is my honest feeling; and when I speak of a sincere and rational anxiety for peace, as the ruling passion of the Government,

* From the MS. notes of Mr. Huskisson.

I mean a strong and steady leaning to pacific counsels and pacific measures; but, of course, tempered and limited by the consciousness of the ability and power of the country fully to meet all the demands of war, should the honour of the country compel us to resort to that alternative.

I am equally prepared to admit—and I think every gentleman who has attended to the speech of the right honourable mover, and to the observations made by my right honourable friend, will admit—that the subject brought under our notice is involved in as much difficulty, intricacy, and embarrassment, as can belong to any question of foreign policy that ever engaged the attention of the councils of this country in a time of peace. From this feeling, and from a conviction that the time is not arrived when we can pronounce an opinion upon it, without prejudging the question, and that even if the time were arrived, we could not do justice to the inquiry without information that could not be furnished to us before the close of the session—I shall not go much at length into the details which have been touched upon by the right honourable mover. The House has not the means, and it is not now called upon, to come to any decisive opinion in respect to the conduct of his Majesty's Government, in the share it has taken in the transactions which have occurred in the Peninsula and in Brazil; and I must, therefore, claim for myself, as every other member has a right to claim, not to be considered as precluded from further discussion, and from stating an opinion hereafter, in consequence of what may have passed this evening.

When I state, Sir, that the questions which connect themselves with the settlement of Portugal and the Brazils are of the most complicated and embarrassing nature, I shall be fully borne out by the concurrence of every man who has watched the progress of events in those two countries, since the restoration of the peace of Europe in 1814.

Gentlemen will recollect that, in 1807, when Buonaparte invaded Portugal, and accompanied his invasion with a declaration that the House of Braganza had ceased to reign, that royal House removed from Europe to Brazil, and transferred the seat of empire from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro. Upon the re-settlement of Europe, after the overthrow of Buonaparte, when, under that royal House, independent Portugal was again restored to its former rank and station among the powers of Europe, it required no great perspicuity in politics to discover that questions of great delicacy and difficulty must arise out of the relations then existing between Portugal and Brazil. Up to 1807, the latter country was merely a distant colony, and had been strictly treated as such. From that period Brazil became in a manner the metropolitan state, and Portugal the distant province.

After the settlement of Europe, this state of things continued for several years. But about the year 1821 or 1822, it was evident that both countries were verging fast towards a state of things, which could only terminate in open war between them, or in an amicable adjustment, formed on the basis of separation and mutual independence. About that time, the late King, John the Sixth, quitted his American dominions, and returned to Lisbon; but not to the exercise of the absolute sovereign power which he had before held in that country. Portugal, following the example of Spain, had established a popular representation, a Cortes, which soon concentred in itself all the power of the state. This Cortes, imitating in that respect, likewise, the example of its prototype, Spain, towards its South American possessions, was bent upon reducing Brazil to its former condition of a colony. The result was a state of hostility between the two countries; and that the heir-apparent to the crown of Portugal, who had remained at Brazil, had no alternative for the preservation of that fine country to the House

of Braganza, but to concur in declaring its entire independence of Portugal, and to become himself Emperor of Brazil.

After this the two countries, Brazil and Portugal, continued at war with one another, until the revolutionary government of the Cortes was overthrown in Portugal. Soon after this change, by which the King of Portugal was restored to his power, a negotiation was set on foot, under the mediation of his Majesty's Government, and by the intervention of Sir Charles Stuart, the British Ambassador at Rio, to bring about a reconciliation between Portugal and the Brazils, upon the basis of preserving both countries to the House of Braganza, but with an entire separation of the two Crowns, and the absolute independence of the two countries respectively. This treaty was completed at Rio in the summer of 1825, and ratified at Lisbon in the autumn of the same year.

Peace was restored between the two countries, and a treaty of commerce and other arrangements of mutual advantage were in train to be concluded between them at Rio, when John the Sixth died, after a very short illness, in March 1826. Now, it is here to be remarked, that immediately upon the treaty of 1825 being proclaimed, the separation of Brazil, and the independence of the two Crowns had, I believe, been recognized by all Europe, Spain, perhaps, excepted. But this treaty had not regulated the order of succession to the two Crowns respectively in the family of Braganza. On this essential point it was silent. It went no further than to provide, that they should not be united on the same head.

Under these circumstances, it was clear that, according to the laws of legitimacy and primogeniture, Don Pedro inherited the whole succession of his father; but subject to the condition that, under the treaty, either Portugal or Brazil was to be devolved upon some other member of his

family, as an independent and separate Crown. To this he was bound. He might make his option between Brazil and Portugal; but he could not retain the sovereignty of both. He decided for Brazil, and that Donna Maria, his eldest daughter, should be the independent sovereign of Portugal. So far he acted strictly in the execution of the treaty. But unfortunately, as I think, in promulgating this arrangement, he annexed to it a condition which, however kindly intended towards Portugal, was neither necessary, nor wise, nor relevant to the execution of the treaty of separation. When I say it was not relevant, I mean that, I do not think that the Emperor Don Pedro had any right to annex this condition to the performance of a stipulation which, by the treaty of separation, he was bound to fulfil. The condition was, that Portugal should accept a charter and a constitution, which he had prepared for them; and his abdication was to be contingent upon that acceptance. Now, if Don Pedro had made his option to reign in Portugal, instead of Brazil, all this would have been very well, and very natural and praiseworthy. But it was not to be expected that a constitution hastily concocted in a distant colony should be received without jealousy by the parent state, upon which it was to be imposed; or that this valedictory present from a sovereign who could have no share in carrying it into execution, and no direct concern in its consequences, could be very acceptable to the Portuguese; or likely to become the permanent constitutional law of that antient monarchy. This constitution, however, such as it was—and of its intrinsic merits I wish to say nothing one way or the other—was brought to Lisbon by the British Ambassador.

It is here necessary to remark, that this Ambassador was the same who had regulated and signed the treaty of separation, in his double capacity of mediator on the part of his Majesty's Government, and of plenipotentiary on

the part of the late King of Portugal, having received full powers from him to that effect; and who, at the time when the account of the king's death was received, was still acting as plenipotentiary from the King of Portugal, in negociating a treaty of commerce, and other arrangements with Brazil. His full powers were, of course, at an end by the death of King John; and he had therefore to return to Lisbon to give an account of his mission. So returning, the Emperor made him the bearer of the new constitution, and of his instructions respecting it. But, as it has been already declared in this House, and was at the time announced to all the courts of Europe, he was merely the channel of the conveyance. I may add, indeed, if my memory does not deceive me, the reluctant channel; for, I believe, he remonstrated with the Emperor against taking charge of that conveyance. Be that as it may, of this I am sure, that no sooner did this Government receive intimation, not diretly from Rio de Janeiro, but indirectly, through France, that a constitution had been granted to Portugal by the Emperor of Brazil, and sent to Europe through Sir Charles Stuart, than, without the loss of a day, the Secretary of State, Mr. Canning, wrote to all the principal courts of Europe, stating that we had received such information, but were no parties directly or indirectly to the transaction. I trust my right honourable friend has no objection to my alluding to these circumstances, the recollection of which is fresh in my mind. I am sure the Government of this country gave no advice to the Government of Portugal to accept the constitution; and I assert, that all that has been said to the contrary is founded on misconception.

My late right honourable friend, Mr. Canning, sent without loss of time, to Lord Heytesbury at Lisbon, copies of the circular which he had addressed to all the courts of Europe. He stated in his despatch, that this country

would rigidly adhere to the rule he had laid down, of non-interference in any transactions affecting the internal institutions of another country. He stated, if I am not mistaken, that the Government of this country abstained from giving any advice to Portugal, as to the mode of dealing with the constitution. Mr. Canning further stated, that he would take it on his responsibility to say, that if the Portuguese did accept the constitution, the Government would feel itself bound by all the obligations of friendship which England had always entertained towards Portugal; and that if they declined it, England would, in that case, also consider herself bound by those obligations. But as to advice, he offered none. He only said this, "In whatever way it may be determined to submit this constitution to the acceptance of the Portuguese nation, it ought to be adopted as speedily as possible; for the matter ought not to be left in a state of uncertainty."

At the same time, instructions were sent to Sir Charles Stuart to confine himself simply to the delivery of the packet which he had received from the Emperor of Brazil, to give no opinion respecting it, and to quit Lisbon as soon as he had acquitted himself of this duty. Sir Charles Stuart implicitly complied with his instructions. The constitution was delivered to the temporary regency, which had been appointed by the late king before his death. They took the means which appeared to them proper for submitting it to the acceptance of the Portuguese nation. It was accordingly accepted, and carried into execution in the month of July, 1826.

But, what was the course adopted by England and all the great powers of Europe on this occasion? They one and all recognized the settlement of the Crown of Portugal upon the person of the eldest daughter of Don Pedro, the Queen Donna Maria, and of the constitution with which that arrrangement was accompanied. They considered

one and the other as proceeding from a legitimate source. The principles of the Portuguese constitution were not much in favour with some of the powers; but inasmuch as it emanated not from the people, but from the legitimate sovereign, granting it freely and *propriâ motu*—however much they might dislike such an offspring, it was not spurious; and, looking to its origin, they could not do otherwise upon their own doctrines, than acknowlege the legitimacy of its birth.

Among the Portuguese peculiarly interested in these occurrences, and who had to subscribe to this new constitution, was the Infant Don Miguel, who, since the year 1824, had been resident at Vienna. I will not now advert to the transactions which compelled him to quit Portugal at that time. It is enough to state, that under the provisions of that constitution, the Regency of Portugal would have devolved upon him, as soon as he attained the age of twenty-five, to be exercised by him, during the minority of the young Queen. In a solemn and authentic manner he took the oath of fidelity to that constitution and to the order of succession established under it. The Emperor of Austria and the King of England became, in a manner, the depositaries of this engagement. It was soon followed by an arrangement between Don Miguel and Don Pedro, brought about by the good offices of Austria and England, in virtue of which Don Miguel was to marry the young Queen. This union appeared calculated to reconcile all interests and to remove all remaining ground of discord and uneasiness, in respect to the Portuguese Crown, and the order of succession in that branch of the House of Braganza. The necessary dispensations from the Pope having been obtained, the parties were affianced at Vienna, in October, 1826, according to all the rites and forms usual on the occasion of such important contracts. On this occasion again, the Infant renewed, in the most solemn manner, the engage-

ments he had before taken. In the month of October following, having then completed his twenty-fifth year, he prepared to quit Vienna, in order to take upon himself the Regency of Portugal. Before his departure, he again pledged himself, in the most public and authentic form, strictly to fulfil all the sacred obligations which he had contracted towards the Portuguese nation, towards his brother the Emperor, towards the queen, his sovereign, his niece, and his affianced consort. With those pledges, and after other arrangements in detail, in accordance with them, had been settled by protocols at Vienna (England and Austria, as mediators, being parties to these protocols), he set off for Lisbon, taking England in his way. We all recollect the honours, the distinction, the kindness with which he was received by his Majesty in this country. At the request of Don Miguel, we consented that our troops, which had been ordered to quit Lisbon, should not be withdrawn till a reasonable time after his arrival. Indeed, he expressed an anxious wish to honour them, by reviewing them before their embarkation. At his request, we guaranteed a loan of money to be raised in this country, in order the better to enable him to enter upon the government with ease and distinction. We sent a squadron of men-of-war to honour his arrival in the Tagus. What is the treatment the King of England has met with, in return for so many acts of substantial kindness and friendship? —what has been the return for so many proofs of confidence on our part? The troops were detained at Lisbon till all the officers of the Portuguese army attached to the English connection were dismissed with disgrace, and the commands given to those who had joined the rebellion in Spain. They were then dismissed without the review. The money, it is true, was saved by the prompt decision of our Ambassador, Sir Frederick Lamb. The fleet was called upon to leave the Tagus. And what was the sequel—one

series of violence, hypocrisy, perjury, and treason, unparalleled in the history of any country in modern times. Shew me, since the days of Richard the Third, any crimes which can be compared with those of the individual, who now fills the throne of Portugal. Is it, or is it not true, that he has availed himself of the sacred trust committed to his hands, under the most solemn sanctions of religion, honour, morality, and allegiance, and cemented, too, by the nearest ties of blood, to turn that trust against a brother, who had confided in him, against a niece, his lawful sovereign, and his affianced wife? Is there nothing of disrespect, nothing bordering upon insult, to the King of England in all these proceedings? Had Don Miguel not made the Government of his Majesty the depository of all the pledges, upon the faith of which he went to Portugal? I will not say that we became the guarantee of these engagements to Brazil, or to the powers of Europe; but I will say, that we had acted the part of a mediator and a friend, that we became, as it were, the voucher, that faith might be put in these pledges, and that other states, from our known connection and alliance with Portugal, governed themselves very much by the example of England. When I say that the conduct of Don Miguel has been highly disrespectful, and, as I think, insulting to the Throne of England, I am sure I need not say, that I am speaking of the government of the country, quite apart from the illustrious sovereign who fills that throne. Well convinced I am, that were this question to be viewed with reference to personal feelings, all possibility of any communication as between a strong and high sense of honour on the one side, and a character which has forfeited all claim to honour and good faith on the other, would have ceased long ago and for ever.

But while I hear a minister of the Crown admit that Don Miguel has been guilty of an indignity to the Crown of England, I am told that this question is to be considered

on public grounds. I admit this distinction. But, making the fullest allowance for it, I have no difficulty in stating my belief, that Don Miguel has offered indignities to this country, which England never would have borne,—which it would have been impossible, consistently with honour, to have submitted to in any case, where the motives for forbearance could have been mistaken. We have overlooked in Portugal, what we never could have tolerated in any greater power. Her weakness, her insignificance, are her protection, and the justification of the forbearance of this Government. But even to this forbearance there must be limits. Moderation in governments is a great virtue. There is no state that can afford to carry it further than England, without incurring the risk of a suspicion injurious to the character and honour of the country.

I do not say, therefore, that we were to have fitted out an armament, to have sent an expedition, and to have gone to war with Portugal. Certainly not, on account of the internal changes in the country—certainly not, on account of the abolition of the constitution. With such changes we have nothing to do. No man can carry further than myself the doctrine of non-interference in the internal concerns of foreign independent states. No man can detest more than myself, any instigation—whatever may be the plausible pretence—to insubordination or turbulence in a foreign country, however misgoverned. Such a state of things may excite feelings of strong compassion or disgust; but I cannot allow those feelings to go further.

But, Sir, have these been the feelings publicly manifested by the Government of this country? Has the moral influence of England been manifested in favour of the Usurper, or of the victims of this fresh usurpation? What is the belief and expression of Europe in this respect? What is the prevalent feeling in this country? What was the effect of our breathless haste in making an official

communication of the blockade of Oporto—of Madeira—of Terceira? What was the effect of a declaration coming from high authority, that the traitors who had aided and abetted Don Miguel in his usurpation were the friends of England, and that those who were suffering the most cruel proscriptions and persecutions, were the enemies of English connexion?

Sir, I grieve to ask these questions. I grieve to think that there is a general persuasion on the continent, that the sympathy, the kind feelings of England, are in favour of the Usurper, that all his enormities are considered as atoned for by his unrelenting hatred of freedom and the free institutions of his country. Sir, I think all this is very unfortunate, and highly injurious to the influence and character of this country. It may please a few on the continent who, notwithstanding the events of the last thirty years, have not yet taken a true measure of their weakness; but it disgusts the many, who in those same events have learnt the secret of their strength. Where crimes so atrocious have been committed, it becomes an honest, a free, and a Christian country, to be specially careful to avoid even the semblance of viewing them with indifference. It is a duty which we owe to public morals and to national honour to mark such flagrant atrocities with the stamp of public reprobation. We ought not to coquet with those who have been guilty of such acts. They ought to be placed under a sort of universal interdict. It is not for the good of civil society—it is not for the honour of thrones—it is not for the interest of religion—it is not for the advancement of private morality, that this complication of treachery, this prostitution of justice, this contempt for the sanctity of oaths, this heartless ingratitude, these cold-blooded cruelties which have marked the career of Don Miguel since he first landed in Portugal, should be looked upon as matters of no concern to the country, whose sove-

reign he has deceived, whose confidence he has abused, and whose patience and forbearance, he appears to mistake for kindness and approbation.

With respect to the other part of these transactions, they shew, I must say, a great ignorance of the laws of this country. Until I see all the documents, I must think that, in Terceira, the Government of this country has exercised an interference in favour of Don Miguel, and unfavourable to the interests of the youthful queen. I think, Sir, this country has not done those things which it perhaps might have done, with respect to the cruelties practised by Don Miguel towards his own subjects, and with respect to the indignities he has offered to the people of England. I am glad that these papers are to be produced. The true character of Don Miguel will be known by posterity, but it ought to be exhibited, at this moment, in all its hideousness; for the more it is known, the greater chance will there be, that Portugal will be raised from her present state of misery and degradation.

DISTRESS OF THE LABOURING CLASSES—COLONIZATION—EMIGRATION.

June 4.

Mr. Brougham having presented a petition from the Manufacturers at Birmingham, praying for an alteration of the Currency, a debate ensued, in the course of which Mr. Wilmot Horton called the attention of the House to the Distressed State of the Labouring Population, and the propriety of encouraging a scheme of Emigration. After he had been replied to by Mr. Sadler,

Mr. HUSSKISON said:—Sir, the honourable gentleman who spoke last is in an error as to the motion now before the House, which he has evidently mistaken for a proposition in favour of emigration. The question before the House really

is, whether the petition from Birmingham shall be brought up. On this occasion, at this period of the session, and at this hour of the evening, I shall not attempt to go into the discussion of the interesting and important subject to which that petition relates. I regret that a fit occasion for a full and fair discussion of this subject has been lost to the House by an accident.

With respect, Sir, to the remarks of the honourable member for Newark, I may say, that neither am I going to discuss the important subject of emigration; but however that honourable gentleman may denounce what he is pleased to call "the theoretical doctrines of political economy," I will run the risk of incurring his anger, by refusing to subscribe to his propositions. The honourable gentleman contends, that the true way to promote the prosperity of the country is to prevent colonization. He has in glowing terms described colonization as a calamity; but what, Sir, have been the results of our experience of the effects of it, in all parts of the world? When we have carried the English language to the fullest extremities of the globe—when we have raised a population of twelve millions under the Government of the United States of America—when in Canada, which at the time of its acquisition by the English, at the peace of 1763, contained only sixty thousand inhabitants, there are now upwards of a million—can it be said, that nothing is to be gained by emigration and colonization? My right honourable friend* is perfectly right in his principle—whatever may have been the mortality of any particular settlement, in any particular year, and under particular circumstances, I trust that Parliament will suffer the people of this country to locate themselves in that fruitful portion of our North American dominions. It is not to be supposed, that men placed in a new country, and in a new condition, and obliged to adopt

* Mr. Wilmot Horton.

new habits, will not have some difficuties to overcome; but, will any gentleman compare their condition with that of the wretched peasantry of Ireland, having only a scanty supply of bad food, and exposed to all the misery arising from that state of gradual suffering which is the only positive check to population in old countries.

Sir, I contend that it will be doing an essential service to the country, to adopt a measure which shall operate as a relief to such a condition of the poorer classes. And when the honourable member for Newark tells us, that the true wealth of a country consists in keeping at home those who consume its productions, does he forget, that by persons going abroad and employing their skill and their capital in undertakings, in which they cannot be so well employed at home, they create a commerce which, but for them, would never have existed, and which, in the end, affords employment to the industry and capital of the people at home? The honourable member seems to imagine it impossible to create a population, to the full extent of the means to be found of supporting it. He must therefore, think, that China is the country of the world in the best condition; and that Ireland would be in a better condition, if its population were ten-fold what it now is. I do not dispute the doctrine of the honourable member, that the wealth of a state consists in its population, and in that, leaving every other circumstance out of consideration, the extent of Ireland and its fertility are sufficient to support a population of ten-fold its present amount. But, Sir, the honourable gentleman who is the opponent of all theorists, goes beyond all the theorists, when he states such a proposition, and leaves out of his consideration the changes which must take place in every respect in the country, before such a population could be provided for.

I do not deny the truth of the abstract proposition, that Ireland might be made to support a population as dense as

that of Middlesex; but it could only be done by finding capital, and devising the means of giving that population employment. The honourable member has quoted Lord Bacon, who is, undoubtedly, a very high authority; but, in doing so, he ought to have recollected, that the same great authority has also stated, that there is no abstract proposition which is universally true. A recommendation of that great man, made in another of his works, will shew the propriety of this observation. Speaking of the idleness which exists in England and in most parts of Europe, he says, "if a man has nothing else to do, let him plant a tree." Now, nothing can appear more wise or more prudent than that, if a man be idle, he should plant a tree; because, in a country like this, where timber is in great request, it would in the course of time become of value. But let the same man migrate to the wilds of Canada, and there the recommendation would be, to cut down a tree; and this is an illustration of the error of attempting to apply theories at all times, and without reference to the actual state of the country.

I will not pursue the subject of colonization and of emigration further than to observe, that my right honourable friend, who has paid so much attention to the subject, and who has furnished us with such important statistic information, is justified in expecting that we shall receive the proposition which he is about to submit. In that proposition I cannot entirely concur; because I cannot go the full length of thinking, that the country can be entirely relieved from its present distress by any practicable measure of emigration. I do not say that it ought not to be one of the measures adopted, in reference to the general system, with regard to the improvement of the condition of the paupers of this country; but, for the State to undertake to convey large bodies of the pauper population from this country to other lands, is a step surrounded by difficulties greater

than any which my right honourable friend seems to contemplate.

Now, Sir, in my opinion, a system of emigration is only wise and prudent, when those who emigrate carry with them the means and the capital necessary for their employment. It is only the connection of property with population, that can render emigration useful to this country, or beneficial to the colonists. It is only such a principle of emigration that can strengthen the colonies, benefit the empire from which they proceeded, and open new markets to the mother country, by multiplying the consumption of her products. Any principle different from this would only increase the amount of misery.

ADDRESS ON THE KING'S SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE SESSION—DISTRESS OF THE PRODUCTIVE INTERESTS—CURRENCY—WAR BETWEEN RUSSIA AND TURKEY—GREECE—PORTUGAL—MEXICO.

February 4, 1830.

An Address, in answer to the Speech from the Throne, having been moved by the Earl of Darlington, and seconded by Mr. Ward, the member for London, an Amendment was moved by Sir Edward Knatchbull, expressive of the Distress which generally prevailed amongst all the Productive Interests of the country. Another amendment was also announced by the Marquis of Blandford, a third by Mr. Protheroe, and a fourth by Mr. O'Connell.

Mr. Huskisson began by observing, that there had been already one amendment proposed, and notice given of no fewer than three others. He was far from censuring the practice of proposing amendments on such occasions as the present. He came, he said, down to the House altogether ignorant of the contents of the Speech from the Throne, and equally ignorant of the intention of the honourable baronet, or of any other gentleman, to pro-

pose an amendment; but an amendment having been moved, and a debate having arisen upon it, he felt himself called upon, without reference to the possibility of prospective arrangements which might be for consideration hereafter, to express his opinion on the subject, as to the simple matter of fact, as regarded the state of the country,—which was the real question at issue. If the question were as to any particular mode of relief, it would be unequally unwise and unbecoming to go into it, when assembled to thank his Majesty for his gracious speech from the Throne; accordingly, from any thing of that sort he should cautiously abstain. But, after what he had heard from the noble mover and from the honourable seconder of the proposed address—after all that had fallen from those who had since addressed the House—and, from his own knowledge, he felt bound to state his opinion, that the real facts of the case, as regarded the public distress, were more correctly stated in the amendment moved by the honourable baronet, the member for Kent, than in the address proposed by the noble lord.

Entertaining that opinion, whatever might be his wish to abstain from saying any thing upon this occasion, he was no longer at liberty to support an address which did not contain so accurate an estimate of the actual state of the country, as was to be found in the amendment. He thought it a material circumstance in the state of universal disquietude and dissatisfaction that prevailed at present, not to provoke a hostile discussion between the representatives of the people and the people themselves, and not to call down on the House of Commons reproach, by understating the distress and difficulty of the time. The best course to be adopted, in order to meet and overcome these difficulties, was to look at and avow them fairly. He did not despair of seeing the country restored to a situation of prosperity; but, from all the information which he possessed, he felt satisfied

that there now existed that degree of pressure on the productive classes generally, which, were it to be permanent or long continued, would be incompatible with their continuous existence. He was of opinion that the country—as far as the productive classes were concerned—was in an unsatisfactory and suffering, but he trusted and believed, not in a decaying and falling state. If Parliament looked at the subject properly, and acted as a part of the Speech recommended, he was firmly persuaded they would find themselves fully competent to cope with the existing difficulties, and overcome them. But it was by studying to benefit, to the utmost, the industrious classes, that we could alone lay any solid foundation of public happiness, or revive prosperity.

There were many things difficult to be accounted for in our present condition, but which Parliament would do well to attend to. Some gentlemen attributed the distress to the supposed deficiency in the currency,—a proposition which he thought it would be difficult to maintain; for we now saw money more abundant in the metropolis than at any former period. We saw exchequer-bills, producing two and a quarter per cent. interest, selling at a premium of seventy-five shillings, and we saw the low rate at which money was every day borrowed. The fact was, there was a stagnation in several parts of our productive industry, and an overflow of capital in others. It was a cause of satisfaction to observe, that the produce of our exports last year exceeded the produce of the exports of any preceding year; but, at the same time, he knew that the capital and property so employed had, in many instances, been unproductive. It would be difficult to reconcile the two facts of a deficient currency and a low rate of profit. In almost all branches of productive industry the profits were so small as not to compensate for the amount of capital employed, or afford sufficient support to the individuals whose labour

was required. There must be some irregularity of action in our condition. Circumstanced as we were, to propose to increase the currency would be similar to recommending an individual, subject to too great and rapid an action of the blood, to drink a quantity of brandy.

He would not support the honourable baronet's amendment, if by so doing he should be thought to imply an assent to some of the doctrines urged by its supporters. So far was he from concurring in those doctrines, that he had heard with satisfaction what had fallen from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in answer to them. He was satisfied that among the causes of the disquietude and dissatisfaction that existed, were the delusive hopes, the unfounded apprehensions, the general anxiety, which must prevail in a country, so long as that which formed the measure of value, with respect to property, was subject to doubt and change. If then we had even been in error—which he was far from admitting, but maintained the contrary—in 1819, 1825, or 1826, it would be better to persevere than to unsettle the state of the country, by again tampering with the Currency. It was to other means that the country must look for relief. An unsettled state of the public mind was one of the greatest evils that could befall a country.

He did not collect from the speech of the honourable baronet, that any member was required to commit himself to any particular measure, if he supported the amendment. His right honourable friend had hinted that distress was not so general as the amendment would make it appear; but all his right honourable friend's ingenuity could not prove that the distress was confined to some particular parts of the country, as the Address stated. The productive classes generally were in a state of distress. He believed that this was owing to causes, to many of which it was beyond the power of Parliament to apply a remedy; but it was in their power to satisfy the country as to what

the causes were, and to afford partial relief, by giving a better direction to the capital of the country. Upon that point he differed materially from the honourable seconder of the Address. The honourable member seemed to think, that the reduction of the rate of interest in some of the higher denominations of the public securities would operate favourably; but it appeared to him that even that reduction was far from being an unmixed good.

He did not wish to enter into the large field of foreign politics, but he might observe, in passing, that his Majesty's Speech merely stated, that the war between Russia and Turkey had terminated. This was the statement of a fact, it had been said, before known; but such statements were not uncommon in speeches from the Throne. For his part, he was glad that it was stated simply that the war had terminated, without any explanation of the mode by which that termination had been effected. It was a received principle, that the independence of Turkey was necessary to the maintenance of a just balance of power in Europe, and that circumstance threw upon Government the *onus* of showing that there was nothing in the treaty between Turkey and Russia contrary to this principle. However, when the documents should be before the House, it would be time enough for them to discuss how far the spirit of the treaty of the 6th of July had been subsequently preserved. Up to the arrival of the Russians in Adrianople, no great progress appeared to have been made in the cause of the Greeks.

With respect to Portugal, whatever disposition there had been, during the two last sessions, to abstain from looking into the question of our foreign relations, he hoped that we should no longer avoid an inquiry, which it was necessary for the character of the country to make. A recognition of Don Miguel had been hinted at; but if it was carried into effect we ought to receive more information on the subject

than we had obtained last session. Until we had obtained further information, we should not be in a situation to investigate whether we had properly discharged all our obligations.

He had witnessed with great regret in his Majesty's speech, which ought to advert to all matters of general interest, an omission of all reference to wars that were waging in another hemisphere. There was a treaty of peace and amity between this country and Mexico; and he should have thought, that the efforts made to prevent the industry of that country from taking a natural direction—that the attempts at a predatory warfare, inconsistent with the revival of industry in Mexico and other states of the new continent, inconsistent with the interests of commerce and navigation, hostile to the proper management of the mines of South America, which it was our interest to see as productive as possible,—he should have thought that these were matters which required some notice, and he should have been glad to hear that his Majesty continued to use his endeavours for the restoration of peace, tranquillity, and security in the new states; in the prosperity of which this country had the greatest possible interest. It was not the interests of trade and commerce that were alone concerned—the matter did not relate to this country only. Europe had the greatest possible interest that South America should be in a state of tranquillity and independence, and that those States should be made valuable and useful civilized societies. There was a time when those States looked up to this country as a power ready to rescue them from impending dangers—not by military demonstrations, but by its good offices, of which they were worthy as far as they could be exerted, if not in reference to their peace and tranquillity, yet with reference to our own interest.

The House divided: For the Amendment, 105. Against it, 158.

EAST-INDIA COMPANY'S CHARTER—AND BANK OF ENGLAND CHARTER.

February 9.

Mr. Secretary Peel having this day moved, "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the present state of the Affairs of the East-India Company, and into the Trade between Great Britain, the East Indies and China,"

Mr. HUSKISSON said, he had heard with the greatest satisfaction the speech of his right honourable friend, thereby redeeming the pledge given last session by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that a Committee should be appointed, which Committee should have all the necessary powers for instituting a general, comprehensive, and effective inquiry into the interests which connected this country with India. No one could doubt, after the speech of his right honourable friend, that this inquiry would embrace every question connected with the subject.

He was glad that the Committee was so formed, as to be enabled to make a full and complete report to the House. He had heard with satisfaction, that it was not to receive from Government any preconceived notion or opinions on the subject of its inquiries. He agreed with his right honourable friend, that in making alterations they ought to proceed with care and caution; but, at the same time, he should have been better pleased if his right honourable friend had not exhibited too strong a bias towards retaining the present machinery, by which the trade of India was carried on. He should be sorry that an impression should go forth, that the Government had a bias towards retaining every thing as it was; and that it was their opinion that there ought not to be those changes which the public voice, out of doors, had said ought to be made. To the Committee would be opened a fearfully extensive field of

inquiry, and he perfectly agreed with his right honourable friend, that the House at large, and not the Committee, ought to decide upon those great subjects which sprung out of the question. The extent of the inquiry inclined him to agree with the honourable member near him, who had suggested that the appointment of two or three Committees would be preferable to the present course.

He would take the present opportunity of asking the right honourable gentleman, whether it was the intention of Government to deal in this manner with the Charter of another company, which would expire about the same time with the Charter of the East-India Company,—he need hardly say that he alluded to the charter of the Bank of England. And when he spoke of the Charter of the Bank of England, he must say, that in his conscience he believed, that out of the use—not to say the abuse—of that charter, had arisen most of the evils and the difficulties, under which the country was now labouring. He would not say "the abuse" of the charter but the misuse, if they pleased; for he had no intention of attaching blame, either to the Government or to the Directors. He would not go into that point now; but in alluding to it, he must say, that if the productive interests of the country were now in difficulties, many of those difficulties might be traced to the manner in which the affairs of the Bank of England had been conducted during the late war. No man could look dispassionately at the history of the last thirty years, without seeing that the powers vested in the Bank of England had affected the property and the pursuits of all classes of the country, in a most important manner.

It was his own opinion, that the Charter of the Bank of England, subject to certain modifications, ought to be continued; but he was also of opinion, that there ought first to be an inquiry, because much good would result from such a course.

EAST RETFORD DISFRANCHISEMENT BILL.—REFORM OF PARLIAMENT.

February 11, 1830.

Mr. Nicholson Calvert having moved, "that leave be given to bring in a Bill to prevent bribery and corruption in the Borough of East Retford," Mr. Tennyson moved as an amendment, "that leave be given to bring in a Bill to exclude the Borough of East Retford from electing Burgesses to serve in Parliament, and to enable the town of Birmingham to return two representatives in lieu thereof." After the original motion had been supported by Mr. Batley, and the amendment by Mr. Marshall, Lord Howick, Mr. O'Connell, and Lord Normanby,

Mr. Huskisson rose and said*—

So few months have elapsed, since, at a late period of the last session, I had an opportunity of stating fully my views and sentiments upon the question now under consideration, that I shall not think it necessary or warrantable to go over the same ground again on the present occasion. I may, however, be permitted to say, that every thing which has since occurred—every thing which is now passing—has confirmed and strengthened me in my conviction of the importance of transferring the elective franchise from East Retford to the great and populous town of Birmingham, instead of giving it to the adjoining hundred of Bassetlaw; —has satisfied me, that this is the best course, not only in reference to general interests, but also the safest and most prudent for those who, like me, wish to guard against the growing danger of abstract and general reform;—of those, in short, who, like me, wish to take every opportunity of erecting a good, and fortifying a strong, defensive position, against that formidable aggression upon the general constitution of the Government.

* From Mr. Huskisson's MS. notes.

If, by the influence of his Majesty's Government, I am driven from this position which I now occupy—if the present proposition for a moderate and reasonable reform be defeated by means of that influence—I may perhaps, from the same feeling, be compelled to resort to another; but if I am, it is one that I shall fall back upon with reluctance, and only because I will always take the best position that can be resorted to, against what appears to me the more general danger of an overwhelming and sweeping change in the mode of sending representatives to this House.

I have said, Sir,—'if I am driven from the position I now wish to take by the influence of his Majesty's Government,'—because I have reason to believe, that that influence is exercised to its utmost legitimate extent on the present occasion, and because I have no doubt, that without such an exercise of it, we should be able to succeed in procuring the representation for Birmingham. When it was not so exercised, this House transferred the representation of Grampound to the important town of Leeds; and that of Penryn, as far as this House could effect it, was transferred to Manchester. And yet, Sir, the feeling in favour of such a transfer, and the circumstances which called forth that feeling, were much less strong at that period, than they are at present.

From the bottom of my heart, and with a deep sense of the unsettled and disquieted state of men's minds, not only in what relates to their own concerns, but to almost every question long dear to the country, and not less to Parliament than to others—I say, from the bottom of my heart, I wish that those who exercise a preponderating influence in the councils of his Majesty's Government, and who are strangers to this House, had a more just sense of what the Commons House of Parliament is, or ought to be at least, and of what the influence of public opinion is, on the practical workings of our constitution.

Sir, we have had lessons on this subject, which ought to

teach statesmen something of prospective wisdom. As much as any man I rejoice in the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. As much as any man I rejoice in the final overthrow of every vestige of the Roman Catholic penal code. As much as any man I rejoice in every successive concession which has been wrung from prejudice—concessions in favour of civil and religious liberty, concessions in favour of intelligence, concessions in favour of commerce, concessions in favour of general improvement. But let me tell gentlemen, let me solemnly warn them, as they take a retrospect of the history of these concessions, that the independence, and dignity, and efficiency of a legislature (I say nothing now of the executive government) are at stake, in not appearing to yield, till necessity and the pressure of public feeling without renders resistance no longer possible, or at least safe.

Strongly impressed with this feeling myself, I own that at the opening of this session I did not quite despair—though I confess my hopes were faint—that his Majesty's Government would take a different view of this question from that upon which they have hitherto acted. I did not wholly despair when I heard the noble lord* who moved the Address with so much ability and good feeling, explain the grounds which had induced him, after sitting in Parliament seventeen years, to take the task upon himself, usually assigned to younger members, and address you, from the position which he then, for the first time, occupied in the House. How, Sir, could I despair, when I heard that noble lord state, that, during those seventeen years, he had been uniformly on the side of liberal principles, and that he was prepared to support the present Government as he had supported, I believe, that at the head of which was my late right honourable friend, Mr. Canning, because it was disposed to give fair play to those principles, to adopt

* The Earl of Darlington.

those measures, which had been advocated by the side of the House on which he had long held his seat; and, in short, to use the words of the noble lord, "to be a Tory administration, acting upon Whig principles."

When I heard the cordial cheers of many who sat near the noble lord at this declaration, I was not surprised, recollecting that, to say nothing of measures to which I have already alluded, and for which the Government deserves every applause, the Attorney-General is the same learned and distinguished individual who filled that situation in the administration of my late right honourable friend; and that another individual,* no longer a member of this House, who also held an office in that administration, is now most deservedly promoted to one of higher rank and greater importance, but which deprives us of his further services. Of that individual, Sir, I will only say, that I have long and intimately known his public character, as I knew his virtuous and gallant father before him; and, as he is absent, perhaps I may be permitted to add, that I know no man who will carry a more sound mind, more sterling good sense, more uncompromising firmness, and a more honest zeal to correct abuses, into the exercise of his high trust, than my right honourable friend. But when I recollected a little further, not three years ago, the manner in which the first nomination of these same distinguished individuals was assailed by some of those who now applaud the declaration that the Tory administration is acting upon Whig principles, I own that I did infer from it some faint hope, that we should find this declaration illustrated and made good in the present instance. The more so, as, if I mistake not, we had not only the benefit of the vote, but also of the support, of an official speech in our favour of a noble lord, a near relation of the noble earl who moved the address—I mean the member for the county of Durham.†

However, Sir, it seems that I was too sanguine in that

* Mr. Abercrombie. † Lord William Powlett.

expectation, and I can only say, that I greatly regret that the House is to be dragged—reluctantly I believe—through the course formerly prescribed to them. I shall deeply lament it, because, under such circumstances, I think that the impression occasioned out of doors by this course will be far from favourable to the general interests of the country. It is quite impossible that any one in the situation in which I stand with respect to a town of equal importance with Manchester, Birmingham, or Leeds,—one of the greatest towns in point of wealth, and power, and importance, in the commercial transactions of the country,—it is quite impossible that I should not almost daily ask myself the question,—"How is it possible for me, a member for Liverpool, to doubt the importance of such a town as Birmingham,—of such a town as Manchester,—of such a town as Leeds, being represented in Parliament?" My constituents must feel how incompetent I am to discharge the duties assigned me as their representative; but still I am prepared to say, from the frequent communications I have with them (from which I derive much material information, to my own great benefit and better qualification for the discharge of my duties in Parliament,) I am prepared to say, that my constituents will freely admit that the fact of their having representatives in Parliament is a great and substantial benefit to them.

I cannot, Sir, flatter myself that I was nominated upon the East-India committee, appointed last night, out of any compliment to myself as an humble individual. Doubtless, my name was placed upon the list, because I represented a wealthy, active, and important community. Then, I asked myself, if Birmingham, Manchester, and Leeds, had also representatives in Parliament, would the House have been able or inclined to exclude them from being heard through such representatives, upon an occasion so important to their interest? It would have been impossible that such

a thing should have taken place. Last summer, Sir, I spent a fortnight among my constituents in Liverpool, and a shorter period at Manchester—that great seat of the manufacturing interests; and from the communications I then had with the most influential and intelligent persons in both those places, I derived much valuable information, connected with their peculiar interests, as well as those of the country at large—information which I never could have acquired from formal deputations to the Board of Trade. It is by duly considering the results of such intercourse, and collecting general opinions on given subjects, that the interests of the public can be best consulted. Why then, Sir, should places capable of affording such sources of information be excluded from the advantages of representation? When I proposed that the name of Mr. Marshall, the member for Yorkshire, should be placed upon the East-India committee, in the room of that of the honourable member for Sussex, because my honourable friend, the member for York, had paid considerable attention to the subject of India, and the honourable member for Sussex had not, what did my right honourable friend, the Secretary for the Home Department, say in answer to this proposition? Why, that the committee was very numerous—that he had endeavoured to select and place in it some representatives of every separate interest in the country, and that the honourable member for Sussex had been nominated, because he represented the wool interest. I own, that the gravity with which my right honourable friend stated his reason about the wool interest had nearly overcome me; and I felt disposed to ask, whether there were a county member in the House who did not represent something of the wool interest, as well as the other interests connected with agriculture? When my right honourable friend talks of the wool interest being represented by the member for Sussex, I ask my honourable friend, the mem-

ber for Staffordshire, who is also upon the committee, and indirectly represents the hardware and mineral interests of which Birmingham is the centre, whether those interests do not deserve to be directly represented in this House? Do not those interests form one of the great branches of our national resources? Is the great town of Birmingham unrepresented,—or the hundred of Bassetlaw represented, as regards wool, by the member for Sussex, and as regards every thing else by the two members for Nottinghamshire—the worthier of sending members to Parliament?

But I turn from this point, which is merely a question between Bassetlaw and Birmingham, and one that does not admit of a doubt, and come to another consideration. I saw lately in Birmingham an association which, as far as I can analyse its elements, principles, and operations, seems formed exactly on the model of the Catholic Association; for it has its subscriptions, its funds, its meetings, its discussions, and its great agitator. The purpose of this Association is to raise a universal cry for parliamentary reform —to carry the question by exaggerating the difficulties, abuses, and distresses of the country. Admiring, as I do, the talent of the gentleman who presided at the late Birmingham meeting, I, for one, would much rather see that gentleman in the House of Commons—as fortunately I see the honourable member for Clare in the House of Commons—I would rather see the chairman of the Birmingham meeting here as the representative of that town, than presiding over such an association, and sending forth those statements and appeals to the country, which is perhaps too prone, at the present moment, to act on the apprehensions generated by them. These, Sir, are the reasons which induce me to support the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Bletchingley. If it be lost, I shall have no further concern in the business; for it seems almost indifferent to me—(at least I find little con-

solation in the alternative)—whether the representation remain in the rotten borough of East Retford, or be extended to the adjoining hundred of Bassetlaw.

The House divided: For the original motion, 126. For Mr. Tennyson's amendment, 99. Of whom, Mr. Huskisson was one.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL'S MOTION FOR A BILL TO ENABLE MANCHESTER, LEEDS, AND BIRMINGHAM, TO RETURN MEMBERS TO PARLIAMENT.

February 23.

This day, Lord John Russell moved for leave to bring in a Bill "to enable the towns of Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham to return Representatives to serve in Parliament." After the motion had been seconded by Mr. Wilbraham, Lord Sandon moved, as an amendment, "that it is expedient that all Boroughs, in which gross and notorious corruption shall be proved to prevail extensively, shall cease to return members to serve in Parliament; that the right of returning members to serve in Parliament so taken from any Borough which shall have been proved to have been guilty of bribery and corruption, shall be given to some great unrepresented town, or to some one of the largest counties; and that it is the duty of this House to consider of further means to detect and prevent corruption in the election of members of Parliament." The original motion was supported by Lord Morpeth and Dr. Lushington, and opposed by Mr. Horace Twiss, General Gascoyne, Lord Valletort, Sir George Murray, and Mr. Wynn.

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and said:—*

It is not, Sir, my intention to occupy the time of the House for more than a few moments. However much it may have been my wish to enter fully into the discussion, the state of my health will not permit me to do so at this moment; but, at the same time, I cannot give a silent vote on the question. My noble friend who proposed the amendment has told us, that he comes

* From Mr. Huskisson's M.S. notes.

to the view which he has taken on the subject with considerable difficulty, and after much consultation with his friends. I also can say, that in like manner I have come to the view which I take on the subject, after considerable deliberation and reflection, and I am sorry that I do not take the same view of it as that which has been adopted by my noble friend, the mover of the amendment. My noble friend's amendment, if I understood it, goes, in the first place, to state, that it is most desirable that these great manufacturing districts should have a direct representation in this House. He thus commences by admitting the existence of the grievance; and so far I go along with him in his view of the case. But I next find my noble friend, instead of applying a remedy to this great practical and acknowledged evil, coming forward with the proposition, that whenever three boroughs should happen to be guilty of a great crime, their franchise shall be transferred to the three large manufacturing towns, Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham. The remedy, therefore, which my noble friend proposes for this great evil depends upon the detection of a great crime. But I beg to remind him, that upon this very question, as to the detection of guilt in a borough, which he makes anterior to the application of a remedy to the existing evil,—upon this very question the two branches of the legislature have never been able to agree. Therefore, if this House should vote that the non-representation of those great towns is a great practical evil, and that the remedy is to be found in the detection of guilt on the part of delinquent boroughs, it would be hopeless for us ever to attempt a remedy for it; since, as has been seen in the cases of East Retford and Penryn, we should never be able to apply it.

It is upon these grounds, Sir, that I cannot support the amendment proposed by my noble friend. Neither can I

consider the observations of my right honourable friend below me,* possessed of much weight; for the principle on which he insists would prevent the House from exercising its judgment and discretion in all future time. I do not conceive it necessary to go into the details which have been dwelt upon by my honourable and learned friend, the under Secretary of State for the Colonies,† —details which were grounded principally upon the great danger of innovation, and which consisted of arguments that may be found in any speech made of late years, either against reform in Parliament or upon the Catholic question. Neither do I conceive it necessary on this occasion to travel into the wide question of Parliamentary reform. I cannot, however, avoid observing, in reference to the arguments which have been drawn from the union with Scotland against the motion of the noble lord opposite, that such arguments are deserving of but little notice; recollecting, as I do, that upon every occasion, when it has been obviously necessary for the good of the country and for the essential interests of the state, to depart from the mere letter of the act of union, Parliament has always done so, and it would indeed be contrary to common sense to follow a different line of conduct. The self-same arguments were applied to the great measure of last session, which was charged as a departure from the act of union with Scotland, and were then triumphantly refuted. My right honourable friend, when he lays so much stress upon the arguments drawn from the act of union with Scotland, should bear in mind that that act would not be nearly so much departed from by adopting the proposition of the noble lord, as it has been long since departed from by the introduction of a hundred new members into this House in consequence of the legislative union with Ireland. This question, then, should be determined by its justice and fitness; and the House in deciding

* Mr. Wynn. † Mr. Horace Twiss.

it should ask itself, what injury or injustice it can inflict upon Scotland by conferring an essential benefit upon England? By the admission of my noble friend, the mover of the amendment, and of all who have spoken in support of it, we are now dealing, not with a fanciful and theoritical, but with a real, practical, and ascertained evil. Now, by giving representatives to those three great manufacturing districts the House will at once provide for the evil under which they are at present suffering, and which materially affect their interests, concerns, and pursuits. In giving the bill its support, the House will be giving a direct representation to manufacturing districts, possessing a vast mass of population, wealth, and industry, and having daily interests to support, and claims to urge in this House, and who, consequently, have a right to be represented here. And I will further say, after the decision recently come to by the House, on the case of East Retford, that the only course left for me, in order to guard myself against the risk of entailing any indefinite change or speculative alteration, in the frame of the House of Commons, or the manner in which it is now constituted.

I have ever been—I now am—I shall continue as much as ever—an enemy to what is called parliamentary reform on principle; that is, to any general reform in the formation of the House of Commons, which is founded upon the principle of theoretical improvement. Any such plan of reform, I am convinced, and all history, all experience, all knowledge of human nature and human passions, bears me out in the conviction, however it might, for a season or two, adopt itself safely to ordinary and quiet times, would upon the first great excitement of popular feeling (and such excitements are inevitible in every form of society) subvert the whole frame of the constitution, and substitute, for the security and protection of a well-regulated Government, either the evils of democracy or those of despotism; or

more probably the dreadful visitation of both those tyrannies, in their natural order of succession. Nothing, I am well aware, is so easy as to take to pieces and to hold up separately to trial and condemnation the different descriptions of franchise and modes of election, by the exercise of which the present House of Commons is created—nothing so hopeless, as to defend each separate part, when thus brought up to be arraigned abstractedly from the whole. I think it a waste of time, and perversion of common sense, to look at our constitution in this way. If, therefore, I am challenged to say, whether I am prepared to advocate this or that particular description of elective franchise, which prevails in this or that particular borough, I will only answer the question by saying, that I look to the whole as one aggregate—that if the present frame be once taken to pieces, no man could put it together again, and that I do not believe that the wisdom of man—(always recollecting in old societies how that wisdom is controuled and swayed by passions, prejudices, and interest)—could create another and a new frame that would look as well, and last as long, as the present one.

On a late occasion, I stated to the House, that as an opponent to all wholesale reform—to all reform upon principle—I am very desirous to transfer the elective franchise from East Retford to Birmingham, as the means of justifying my defensive position against that class of reformers. My right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, thought this would be a dangerous move, and he kindly advised me to make my stand in the hollow rotten swamp of East Retford, only masking the untenable weakness of that position by extending it to the lines of Bassetlaw. And, Sir, he had the further kindness, when he found I was not convinced by his good advice, to bring up all his well-trained and well-disciplined forces, to prevent my movement to Birmingham. In that measure he was suc-

cessful, and thereby rendered the present motion of the noble lord necessary. But I am convinced that his success has only increased the danger against which he is anxious to guard himself. I am convinced that he would be more secure, if he could satisfy the just expectations of those three great districts, of which Birmingham, Manchester, and Leeds, may be considered the head quarters.

The question now before us is—whether greater danger would accrue to the constitution, and to the existence of a good feeling on the part of the people of this country towards the House of Commons, by giving the representative franchise to these extensive manufacturing districts, than by withholding it. Will any man, Sir, contend that the want of representatives, with whom they could be in daily communication, and who would effectually watch over and protect their important interests in the legislature, is not a great hardship upon the population of those districts? Surely the granting such a necessary privilege to them, could in no way endanger our liberties or our constitution! To say that the interests of those important districts are better attended to in Parliament, in consequence of their not having representatives in this House, is a paradox which I am sure no honourable gentleman is prepared to defend. My right honourable friend near me is opposed to the transference of the franchise to these three great towns—the capitals of their respective manufacturing districts,—until we shall have the same number of corrupt boroughs disfranchised. He says, that the district of Halifax is superior in amount of population to any of those towns; and he asks, why should not a call be made for a representative for Sheffield, upon the same principle as that upon which this motion is founded? But it should be recollected, that Leeds is the capital of the woollen manufacture, and therefore may be justly taken as the representative of that interest; that Sheffield, though with a large population,

and an extensive manufacture, would be fully represented by Birmingham, which is the head of all that manufacture; and that Manchester is, in a certain degree, justly regarded as the capital of the cotton manufacture. Thus, by giving the franchise to these three great towns, all those different interests would be represented in this House.

My right honourable friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, gave this House to understand, upon a former evening, that, on some future occasion, he may acquiesce in granting the franchise to these towns. Now, Sir, I contend, that if we are to give representatives to these manufacturing districts at any time, it should be done now. This is the occasion for giving them that privilege, if we are to give it to them at all. But I am afraid, Sir, that whatever this House may do, or hereafter be inclined to do, it will be disappointed in its efforts by an opposition in another place. I fully concur in the opinion expressed by a noble friend of mine, the late Foreign Secretary,* who, when a member of this House, said, that one of the greatest blots on this country, in the eyes of all intelligent and well-informed persons, was, that such an important class as the great manufacturing population should be almost entirely without representatives in Parliament. In like manner, the late Earl of Liverpool, when a bill was sent up from this House, transferring the elective franchise from Grampound to Leeds, stated, that it would be desirable that the words "Leeds and Yorkshire," should be omitted in the bill, and the selection of the place left to the prerogative of the Crown. And what did my noble friend add upon that occasion? He said, that if it were left to the prerogative of the Crown to select the place, it would be understood that the franchise would be given to some large and populous town.

It is, Sir, upon such principles, that I support the noble lord's motion on this occasion. We ought not to

* The Earl of Dudley.

allow technicalities to stand in the way of real practical improvements. The Government and the Legislature must keep pace with the spirit of the age. They should neither be behind it, nor before it. I do not think it safe for Government never to come down with any important measure of reform, until they are driven to do so by overwhelming majorities. My noble friend who has proposed the amendment is young, and he will live to see the day, when the representative franchise must be granted to the great manufacturing districts. I candidly confess I think that that time is fast approaching, and that, one day or other, his Majesty's Ministers will come down to this House to propose such a measure, as necessary for the safety and salvation of the country. I think there is little chance of seeing the elective franchise extended to these towns by the disfranchisement of rotten boroughs, by reason of the opposition to be encountered in another place; and I would recommend the noble lord, if he should obtain leave to bring in a bill, to provide in it, that a committee of this House shall be competent to decide the question in future; and that whenever it shall have sufficient evidence laid before it, that a borough has been guilty of corruption, it shall report the same to the House; that the subject shall then be referred to a second committee, as a committee of appeal, who shall again take all the facts of the case into consideration; and that, if that second committee should confirm the conviction made by the first, the disfranchisement of the borough shall forthwith take place, without rendering it necessary to submit our privileges or our rights to the judicature of any tribunal elsewhere. That, Sir, I think, the best way to proceed, instead of going before an unwilling jury, and before parties who can thwart all our efforts to assert our privileges. There is nothing new in this principle. It is acted upon by every election committee of this House. I will only mention the instance

of the Bath election committee, who, when corruption was proved against the corporation, decided that every person paying scot and lot in that city were entitled to vote. Thus establishing a principle which, if acted upon in other places in England, would introduce a far greater change in the representative system, than ever could be effected by the measure which I have recommended. I despair of ever seeing the representative franchise transferred from a rotten borough to a populous manufacturing district, unless in some such way as that which I have mentioned. I am anxious that the fair claims of these great towns to send representatives to Parliament should be strongly impressed upon the legislature. It is upon such grounds that I support the motion of the noble lord. The motion would certainly have been more satisfactory to me if it had gone—as I, the other night, recommended the House to do,—to transfer at once the franchise from East Retford to the populous and important town of Birmingham; but I hope that, however the noble lord and myself may differ in some details on the road, we shall arrive together at the end of our journey.

The House divided: For Lord John Russell's motion, 140. Against it, 188. Majority against the motion, 48.

LORD PALMERSTON'S MOTION RESPECTING THE AFFAIRS OF PORTUGAL.

March 10.

This day Lord Palmerston moved for the production of sundry Papers, to explain the part which the British Government had taken in the Affairs of Portugal. The motion having been supported by Lord John Russell, Lord Morpeth, Mr. E. Davenport, and Sir Francis Burdett, and opposed by Mr. Herries, Mr. Calcraft, and Mr. Secretary Peel,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and said:—

The motion of my noble friend is not founded upon idle

curiosity, or a wish to intermeddle improperly in the diplomatic transactions of this country with other states. But surely, Sir, it will not be denied to us, that it is the right and duty of Parliament to watch over, and if necessary to control the foreign policy of the Government. Surely it will not be denied to us, that it is one of our highest functions to enquire how far that policy is consistent with the permanent interests of the country; and above all, that it becomes us not to neglect that duty, when a question has arisen, and is now pending, which affects not only the public interest, but the honour, the good name, and the station of England in the estimation of the world.

Sir, it was well observed, at the beginning of the session, by my right honourable friend, the member for Inverness-shire,* that, for the two last years, Parliament had, in a manner, abdicated all exercise of its just authority in those respects. He was certainly correct, and I can only say, that I wish we may not some day have cause to repent of that neglect. If ministers deserve the praise of having, during that period, deferred to the judgment of Parliament, and the influence of public opinion, and sacrificed their own, upon some questions of the highest importance in our domestic policy, is it too much to enquire, whether, by the like course, a more salutary direction might not have been given to their foreign policy. In foreign policy the Government has had its own way—in the great feature of our domestic policy it has wisely yielded to an impulse not its own; and I think I may state as the result, that if it stands high for the latter conduct, it has acquired any thing but credit for the former, in the estimation of the intelligent and well-informed, not only of England, but of every country of Europe, in which political discussion is permitted, and in which men are allowed to take an interest in public affairs.

* Mr. Charles Grant.

It would lead me into too wide a field for the debate of this evening, if I were to compare generally the situation in which this country now stands, with that which it occupied before we fell into this state of apathy and indifference to our foreign concerns. I may, however, be permitted to state—and I do it without fear of contradiction—that when that great calamity befel England, the death of Mr. Canning, this country was respected and looked up to, from one end of Europe to the other—every where the real friends of order, of peace, of national improvement, felt a just confidence, that, with Mr. Canning at the head of affairs, England was on their side; that she was not likely to countenance, by her counsels or her conduct, the mischievous schemes and restless views of either of the two extreme parties, which unfortunately exist, more or less, in every part of the continent—equally adverse to the incredible, but highly dangerous folly of those who are endeavouring to bring every thing in the institutions of civil society back to what they were before the French revolution, and of those who wish to revive and again call into activity the spoliating spirit of that revolution, and again to demolish the landmarks of property, and disturb the peace and settlement of Europe, as fixed in the year 1815.

Whatever, Sir, may be the defects of the general arrangements among the great powers of Europe made at that period, they have certainly preserved it in peace; and the nations have become so sensible of its blessings, that the statesman must be little less than insane who seeks to revive the calamities of war. For my own part, I must declare, that I abjure all community of feeling with those who wish again to disturb the repose of Europe. Nothing but the preservation of national honour, or of national independence, could justify a renewal of hostilities.

It has been truly stated, that Mr. Canning had no share in the formation of the Portuguese constitution; and the

fact is so notorious, that no arguments are required to prove it. But that Mr. Canning never interfered concerning this constitution is, Sir, a very different proposition. I am able to bear my personal testimony to the feelings of Mr. Canning on the subject of the Portuguese constitution; for it so happened, that I was in his company when tidings were transmitted from Paris of that constitution having been brought to Europe by Sir Charles Stuart, and the mode in which it had been received in Portugal, and the vexation expressed by him upon the occasion was extreme. He took great pains to make it known that he had not advised the giving of that constitution; but since it had been given, he did not refuse it his countenance. Considering who was the bearer of that constitution to Europe, and considering the activity of Sir Charles Stuart, who was stated, in a despatch of Sir William A'Court, to be solicitous for its adoption, it was a very natural inference on the part of the Portuguese, that this country was anxious to support it.

In the autumn after it had been sent to Europe, it was acknowledged by persons of all classes in Portugal; and when a faction, supported by Spain, or as it was described by Mr. Canning, "a furious fanatical cabal swaying the King of Spain in his own cabinet," and supplied with arms and stores from thence, made its appearance in opposition to the constitution, a force was sent by Great Britain to protect Portugal from the invasion. After such conduct, it was in vain to state that we did not undertake to defend the constitution against foreign enemies: from that moment the connection between Great Britain and Portugal was identified with the maintenance of those free institutions, and from that moment Portugal was necessarily divided into two parties—British and Spanish. I can further assert, that from the moment our ambassador at Vienna signed the protocol concerning the government of Por-

tugal, from that moment we were as much bound by his acts, as if his Majesty's Government had sent out special instructions to him upon that subject, and he had communicated the fact of having received those instructions to the other parties engaged in the negotiation. Yet my right honourable friend has referred to the papers connected with that negotiation, and has contended from them, that in consequence of Sir Henry Wellesley having received no instructions from his Majesty's Government, therefore that Government was not bound by his acts.

Now, Sir, let the House see how that statement agrees with the facts. In adverting to the present point in dispute, I am not about to betray any information which I may have obtained, while holding a place in his Majesty's council. I will state nothing but what I have heard from others—nothing except what has been made matter of the most perfect notoriety—nothing but what has been supplied from documents already published; and the House will see that my right honourable friend has not stated all the facts of the case. Nothing can be more distinct and explicit than the statement put forth—that it was the first object of the British Government to establish peace between the different branches of the House of Braganza, and to maintain the constitution sent to Portugal by Don Pedro. Of that principle Sir Henry Wellesley was perfectly apprised; and nothing, I confess, could exceed the surprise with which I heard my right honourable friend, the President of the Board of Trade, give a denial to such a statement. I shall, Sir, be able to show, from documents already before the public, that the British Ambassador at Vienna was instructed, and did all in his power, to bring about the maintenance of the Portuguese constitution of Don Pedro. It is not denied in any quarter, Sir, that that constitution had an advocate in the negotiations at Vienna. Now, does any one suppose

that that advocate was Prince Metternich? Which was it more likely, that he or Sir Henry Wellesley would act the part of advocate upon such an occasion? When I hear that our ambassador was passive and not active in those negotiations, I cannot help referring to the Protocol of the 23d of October. It sets out with stating, that "after the Protocol of the last conference had been read and approved, the British Ambassador announced that he had a confidential and important communication to make to the Congress." The House may very naturally inquire, what was that important and confidential communication? Nothing less than that it had been discovered that certain persons at Paris and Madrid had organized a plan to overthrow the liberal institutions of Portugal, and for the purpose of indisposing Don Miguel to act fairly and honestly by the constitution sent by his brother; and that therefore it would be necessary to call on Don Miguel to pledge himself strongly in support of that constitution. Thus, then, it is obvious, that England, in every part of these conferences, maintained the attitude and position of an advocate and supporter of the Portuguese constitution, and gave the people of Portugal reason to believe, that those amongst them who also supported it should have the benefit of her assistance, countenance, and support.

Soon after this Don Miguel wrote to his brother, Don Pedro, and in that letter pledged himself to govern according to the Constitution. He also wrote a letter of the same purport to his sister. Then came his proclamation to the Portuguese people, containing similar assurances, and last, though to the Parliament of Great Britain not the least important, there was the letter of Don Miguel to our Sovereign—there was the contract made with the people of England through their Monarch—a contract made in the face of Europe, and of which the people of Europe looked for the performance to the moral weight and character of the

English Government and the English nation. All Europe, I affirm, was led to place confidence in Don Miguel, in consequence of the intervention of England, and the communication which he had had with her. I will not add to these circumstances all the personal honours which Don Miguel received in this country, in consequence of the apparent fairness of his conduct, and which further prove the feelings of our Government with reference to the Portuguese Constitution. But here I request the House to remember the protocol of the 12th of January, to which it is said that the Plenipotentiary of Don Miguel was no party. But, Sir, England was a party to it, and Austria was a party to it, and the subsequent acts of Don Miguel made him a party to it; yet, from his acts, immediately after his return to Portugal, it cannot be doubted that he had previously planned for the abandonment and destruction of that Constitution altogether, and for the establishment of a system directly its reverse.

Sir, Don Miguel leaves this country accompanied by the British ambassador, and supported by a British force. He arrives at Lisbon, and before six or seven days have elapsed, he manifests the fullest disposition to reject the Constitution, to disregard the solemn pledges he has given, and to break the sacred oaths by which he ought to have been bound. He seemed desirous to show, that he could trifle with the most sacred obligations, and gratuitously deceive those who placed confidence in him. His conduct soon proved, that no reliance could be placed on his honour, no faith could be put in his oath. The House has been told, that the British ambassador remonstrated against his proceedings; but we ought, Sir, to have the exact words in which he did so remonstrate, in order that we may judge of the spirit and tendency of the instructions he had received, and the principles which governed the advisers of the King in the course which, upon that

occasion, they thought proper to adopt. Let the instructions on which these remonstrances were founded be produced, and I will prove to the House, that even then the maintenance of the Portuguese Constitution was the great object of the British Government. When my right honourable friend endeavours to implicate me and my noble friend in some of the proceedings complained of, I say to my right honourable friend, "Give us the papers, and then we can defend ourselves." I admit that the despatch which actually recalled the troops did bear my name; but I am sure that my right honourable friend, when he made that assertion, had not given himself time to look at the documents, imperfect as they are. The letter to which I wish particularly to refer—that from Sir Frederick Lamb—is dated the 7th of May, and was received in London on the 27th. Now, it happened, that before the 27th of May I had resigned the seals of the Colonial Department. This letter referred to the copy of a note from the Foreign Secretary, Lord Dudley, to the Marquis Palmella. Why have we not that note before us? On the day on which that letter was written, the council of Don Miguel had resolved upon convoking the Cortes. That was the first indication which we had of a disposition upon his part to be guilty of the treachery which has marked his succeeding course. I again say, that I am perfectly ready to admit that the order was signed by me which was sent for the recal of the British troops, and that that order was sent after the conduct of Don Miguel had given some cause of uneasiness to his Majesty's Government; but it is not to be forgotten, that the Government of that day directed their Ambassador to address to Don Miguel the strongest remonstrances upon the nature and tendency of his conduct; and I much wish that that remonstrance was now on the table of the House, that Parliament might be enabled

to judge of the manner in which the then advisers of the Crown had acted. The result of the despatch which was received on the 22nd of June was, that Sir Frederick Lamb suspended his functions at Lisbon until further orders, and the other Powers all followed the example of England. On the 13th of July, his Majesty's ministers received a very laconic letter from Sir Frederic Lamb, in which he said,—" I enclose the proclamation of Don Miguel, in which he claims to be recognized as King."

Thus, Sir, it appears, that on the 13th of July his Majesty's ministers received the notification of his having usurped the throne of Portugal, long after I had ceased to be connected with the Government. On the 13th of July, ministers received this information, and I beg to remind the House, that only three days after the receipt of this despatch, when one would suppose that the Government would have been filled with indignation at the imposition which had been practised on his Majesty—the present Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs declared—what?—his regret at the usurpation?—his sorrow for the fate of the persons whose lives and properties had been sacrificed by the usurper? No such thing; but that the friends of Don Miguel spoke the sentiments of the Portuguese people! Thus did it go forth to the world, that the moral influence of Great Britain had expired;—thus did it appear, that our friendship and assistance were mere shadows. Well might the Portuguese say, should an English minister again proffer them assistance, " *Noscitur à sociis*,"—heaven defend us from such friends! But it seems, we are to be friends of neither party. As if to make up for the praise thus bestowed on these actions, the noble Lord has lately spoken of the character of this wretched Prince in good set terms of horror and detestation. There are no terms in our language, I believe, which can adequately describe the compound enormity of baseness, perfidy and villany

in so young a man. Before the age of twenty-six he has attempted or perpetrated every crime, and displayed every vice which historical truth and poetical fiction have accumulated upon the head of the most sanguinary and remorseless usurper that ever waded through the blood of innocent kindred and betrayed friends to the British Throne. The parallel may, perhaps, not end here. Portugal, like England, may have a Bosworth Field. For one, I should not be sorry to see it. It would be something, at least, for the honour of high lineage and royal blood, if, like our Richard, Don Miguel should thus be permitted to veil the infamy of his life by the courage which marked its close; and that it should not be said of him, in the page of history, as it was said the other night by a noble lord, that he was cowardly because he was cruel. Let him not descend to posterity blacker than Richard, and then, God knows, he will still be black enough.*

* A mistake, in the report of this passage, having crept into one of the daily papers, Mr. Huskisson, on the 23d of March, called the attention of the House to it; and, while he defended his own character from the effect of it, he bore testimony to the general fidelity of the published reports of the proceedings in parliament.

Mr. Huskisson said:—

"Sir, I rise to request your indulgence for a very short time upon a subject personally interesting to my own character, and in which I may add, that of this House is, in some degree, concerned. Every gentleman who hears me, is aware of the great exertions that are made by the Daily Press to give to the public the speeches made in this House, within a very few hours after they are delivered. This arduous task is executed, I believe, honestly and impartially; but from the difficulties which attend it, especially in protracted debates, it cannot be matter of surprise, that inaccuracies sometimes occur in the reports.

"Upon ordinary occasions, I am sure that I am the last man who would trouble the House, by calling your attention to any trifling inaccuracy; but, Sir, a mistake, which I find has inadvertently been made, in sending to the world some words, purporting to have been

But can we, Sir, talk of this individual abstractedly, and without reference to the engagements into which he has entered? Can we forget the pledge which he had given to the King of England? Can we overlook the indignity

used by me on the motion of my noble friend, respecting Portugal, is not of that immaterial character. In that debate I spoke very late, and in the course of what I addressed to the House, after comparing the character of the present Ruler of Portugal to that of our Richard the Third, I added something to this effect:—that if there should ever arise a struggle for the throne in Portugal, between the usurping uncle and his niece, the legitimate Queen, for one I should not be sorry if the issue of that struggle should complete the parallel;—that it would be something for the honour of high lineage and royal blood, if a life of wickedness were closed by a death of courage. I am the more sure that I used expressions to this effect, as I followed them up by stating, that Don Miguel would then, at least, redeem himself in history, from the character which had been given him in another place, of being cowardly because he was cruel.

"Now, Sir, in some newspaper of the next morning, I am made to use the following words, 'It was to be hoped, that he would finish 'a life of infamy by a death of violence.' As I did not read the debate, it is only very recently that I have been made acquainted with the fact of this misrepresentation. Every gentleman must be aware, that the sentiment put into my mouth is calculated to convey a meaning, of all others, the most abhorrent to the feelings of an Englishman. I have some reason to apprehend that such a meaning has, some how or other, abroad, been assigned to it.

"I have said enough, Sir, to rescue myself from the possibility of so horrible a misconstruction, and, I think, quite enough to satisfy the House, that I owed it to them, as well as to myself, to trouble you with this explanation. I am perfectly sure that, if what fell from me in the debate to which I have alluded, could, by possibility, have conveyed such an impression to the mind of any one individual in the House, an immediate burst of indignation would have given me the opportunity of an instant disavowal; and I am equally sure, that the mistake of the newspaper must have arisen purely from haste and inadvertency; because I cannot believe that any man, having English blood in his veins, would ascribe to another the use of expressions which might seem to imply, if not to justify, assassination."

with which his subsequent conduct visited the monarch of this country? To use a military metaphor, a gallant body of British troops, including a portion of his Majesty's household forces, had been sent out as a covering party, to facilitate the assaults and attacks which Don Miguel was about to make on that constitution, which he had sworn to maintain—they were sent out to look on his brutal violence, and to view, unmoved, the judicial murders which he was committing. Is it for the honour of this country that there should be now some thirty or forty thousand Portuguese wandering all over Europe? I can assure my right honourable friend, whatever he may think, that the impression throughout the world is, that the constitutional party in Portugal has suffered deeply for their strict adhesion to this country. My right honourable friend has argued, that ministers are justified in the course which they have adopted, and that they would have acted improperly if they had, under the existing circumstances, interfered with Portugal. Why! the history of Portugal for the last thirty years, is nothing but the history of English interference; and it cannot be otherwise, in consequence of the engagements which bind this country to that limited and feeble state. All must know the reason of the engagements which bind us to defend Portugal from any aggression; come from what quarter it may. It is evident, when an engagement so binding, and yet so inconvenient to this country, has been so long preserved, that there must be some leading and paramount interest which calls for it. That leading and paramount interest, Sir, is to prevent Portugal from falling into the hands of any of those great powers which adjoin that state, and which this country is accustomed to view with jealousy. Besides, the situation of Portugal is such as to enable this country the more easily to repel any design which the Spaniards may meditate with respect to Gibraltar. Supporting that power

against her continental neighbours, we keep a long line of sea-coast, harbours of great utility, and a considerable maritime population in the hands of an ally. Portugal ought, therefore, to claim as a right a paramount interest in our councils.

What, Sir, has been the history of our connection with Portugal for the last thirty years? Early in the late war, an application was made by Spain to Portugal, calling on her to shut her ports against Great Britain. And what representation did Portugal make to this country? She said, that either we must defend her at our own expense, and with our own army and navy, or else that she must comply with the unjust and improper requisition of Spain. On a subsequent occasion, when overrun by the powerful armies of Buonaparte, this country entered on the defence of Portugal, with a most unbounded profusion of men, of money, of military, of naval, and of every other description of succour. Did we not train up in that country a well-appointed force? Did we not give strength to her government, and inspire her whole population with a spirit warmly devoted to the preservation of her rights? All this was done; and in what situation stands that country now? Why, Sir, all that we did has been overturned; and general corruption, folly, feebleness, and immorality prevails. Portugal is now in a state of absolute inability to make any defence against foreign aggression. She was as inefficient to defend herself in 1827 as she was at any previous time when she had called for our assistance. It is the paramount duty, then, of this country to encourage in Portugal such institutions as would render her government sufficiently strong and powerful, as not to be dependent on England on every trifling occasion of danger. If I were called on to state instances of our interference, not during the period of war, but since the peace, I would say, that before the Constitution was sent over from Rio Janeiro, a large British force was lying in the Tagus.

That force was stationed there, not to assist one party or another, but to preserve the government inviolate. And when Don Miguel attempted the foulest treason to his sovereign and his father, how was it prevented? Why, by the intervention of the British ambassador, who conveyed the injured monarch on board an English ship in the harbour, while his rebellious son was sent out of the country.

Speaking, Sir, of interference, I will suppose that when Don Miguel was engaged in the subversion of the Portuguese Constitution, in violating the most solemn pledges, and profiting by the presence of the British force to perpetrate a series of the most odious treacheries,—I will suppose that Donna Maria, the rightful Queen of Portugal, had then arrived in that country, and had placed herself at the head of the patriotic party;—what, I ask, would then have been the conduct of the British ambassador? Would he have deserted her, or would he not rather, like the ambassador in 1824, have protected her by British force against domestic treason? Does the relationship of the parties make any difference, the rights of the parties being the same? Does absence make any difference as to these rights? I think not. And if the British ambassador received the sanction of the Government in one case, he would not have deserved its censure in another.

My right honourable friend seems not to like the Constitution of Portugal, because the Emperor, it appears, framed it in less than a week, and because it is not suited to the disposition of the Portuguese. I do not stand up to defend that Constitution; but it is no answer to me to say that it must be defective, because it was framed in so short a time. Let my right honourable friend recollect how long Louis 18th was occupied in framing the Charter of France. I believe the Charter of France—and I hope it will not die a premature death—was promulgated in three days after the necessity of such a measure was pointed out.

When the House is gravely told, that England ought not to interfere with other countries,—that this is equally contrary to her practice, and the law of nations,—I beg to ask, what has been the history of Europe for the last fifteen years, but a history of such interference? Naples, Spain, Piedmont, all the smaller states of Europe, have been so interfered with. The fact is, that the sort of Constitution to be interfered with justified or condemned interference. Do any people, urged by their wants, proceed in a peaceable, orderly, and quiet manner to remodel their ancient usages, giving themselves institutions intended to secure life and property, and encourage the growth of improvement, while they afford a protection against arbitrary power;—if those institutions involve the liberty of discussion, and the freedom of the press, and promise to establish a regular and free Constitution;—if they are brought about by the instrumentality of the people, all the despots of Europe immediately join to crush them. No question is asked, whether the Constitution be good or bad, fit or unfit; the only question is, "Does the Constitution flow from the people, is it the spontaneous growth of the public sentiment?" and if it be, is it to be unhesitatingly crushed? That the Portuguese Constitution came from a legitimate source, even the despots of Europe cannot deny; that it was well received by the most intelligent of the Portuguese people is equally certain: But when this Constitution is put down by a fanatical rabble, headed by priests, and stimulated and supported by a neighbouring sovereign, then the people of England hear of nothing but the doctrine of non-interference,—then my right honourable friend the Home Secretary, and the noble Lord, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, though never over-anxious to recognise the power of the people,—found their principle of non-interference on the impropriety, the impolicy, of appealing against the voice of the people. The Constitution

had the marks and stamps of freedom, and that is the reason why it was not supported. Though recognised by all the legitimate sovereigns of Europe, it is not for one moment to be defended. Had an attack been made on an absolute monarch by the people, their armies would instantly have marched to his rescue. They looked, however, with complacency, and with approbation, on the overthrow of free institutions.

Sir, it is not for England to hold counsel with those who entertain such doctrines respecting the duty of sovereigns. I have already referred to the language used on hearing of Don Miguel's usurpation; and is that the only indication we have given of our readiness to support him? What is the reason, I would ask, of the breathless haste with which the blockade of Oporto was recognised,—a blockade so utterly inefficient, and even ridiculous, that whilst the government at Oporto was sitting, devising measures against Don Miguel, the first intimation of it was conveyed by the newspapers? All Europe was astonished that Great Britain should so prematurely have thrown its great influence into the scale of usurpation.

My right honourable friend has said, "Would you have gone to war?" Why, if England had manifested her opinions in the tenour of her conduct, and especially if she had declared those opinions to her allies, such a declaration would alone have been sufficient to crush the usurper. Even if war were the result, no man could deny, that a war against a usurper, a rebel against his sovereign, and a persecutor of his people, would have been just. But had we merely blockaded the Tagus, or issued a declaration, or made a display of force, that would have been sufficient, and there would have been an end of the usurpation. But the fact of this interference in support of the usurper, and against the legitimate sovereign of Portugal, is no longer an inferential charge against the Government. It has lately

been avowed by the head of that Government, that his proceedings in respect to Terceira were pursued with that intent. With grief and mortification, greater than I can trust myself to express, did I hear it declared, that the state of Terceira was not such as it ought to have been, and would have been, had the other Powers of Europe done their duty, as this country had done hers. Sir, what is the plain meaning of this declaration? That we have done every thing in our power, and more, as it will be made too plainly to appear, than the law of nations sanctioned, for the odious purpose of putting Terceira under the dominion of Don Miguel; and that it is a matter of complaint, that other powers had not co-operated with us in this iniquitous project. We are disappointed, forsooth, because the King of the Netherlands would not send his ships of war to prevent Count Villa Flor and his gallant companions from finding an asylum in that island—and yet the King of the Netherlands is not committed, as England is committed, to the protection of those who have stood by the Constitution and their legitimate Sovereign, and who have been taught by us to believe that, in so doing, they are standing by the connection of their country with Great Britain: but, if not committed to them, he felt himself bound by the law of nations, and the claims of misfortunes.

Sir, at the time I am now speaking, this ill-omened declaration has probably reached the young and gallant hero, Count Villa Flor, who is charged with the defence of that island, and who has shown how worthy he is of that trust, by the brilliant manner in which he repulsed the Miguelite forces last autumn. What must have been his feelings at reading this declaration? amounting as it does to an expression of regret and disappointment, that he had been able—(able unassisted, able in spite of the hostile interference of England)—to save himself and his loyal countrymen, by their own prowess, and their own resources, from

the scaffolds, the tortures, the dungeons of the usurper. I think I see him casting his eyes round that little island, now so endeared to him by all the noblest ties of patriotism and honour—I think I hear him exclaim, in the agony of embittered, but indignant feelings, "I was but a stripling, when, in 1810, Lord Wellington made his stand in the lines of Torres Vedras. That last little nook of the land of my birth was then the only spot in the west of Europe, from Venice to the mouth of the Vistula, which was not under the yoke of, or in immediate subjection to, one overwhelming usurpation. It was there that I saw Lord Wellington plant that standard of defiance against the countless armies of Buonaparte, which, three years afterwards, flying triumphant across the Pyrenees, was waving in victory, and amid the shouts of general peace, upon the ramparts of Thoulouse. The sight of Lord Wellington shut up at Torres Vedras first kindled in my youthful bosom the love of freedom, and the aspirations of honourable fame. If from Terceira I now defy the tyrant of Portugal, it is because the example of the Duke of Wellington has taught me what may be achieved by indomitable fortitude, and by unshaken perseverance in a just cause. It is with unbounded admiration of those virtues in him, that I have studied to make him my pattern, and that I raise my daily prayers to Heaven, that I may have the constancy to emulate them for the restoration of my lawful sovereign, and the deliverance of my native land." If these be the feelings of Count Villa Flor, when he receives the declaration to which I have alluded with so much pain and regret, I can only say that, with those sentiments, I had rather be Count Villa Flor, shut up with his faithful band at Terceira, than the Prime Minister of England, regretting that he and they are still able to defy the vengeance of Don Miguel; and fearing that from thence, they may at last

accomplish the downfall of his tyranny, and the restoration of peace and happiness to Portugal.

Upon the whole, Sir, I contend, that whether Parliament looks to the honour of Great Britain or its interests, whether it looks to the opinion of foreign states or to the necessity of encouraging freedom; it is bound to interfere—it is bound to call for that information which can alone enable it to form a correct opinion of the conduct of ministers. I wish for inquiry, and for the interposition of the authority and opinion of Parliament, in order to prevent those further proceedings which would make the ministers of England appear disadvantageously in the eyes of Europe, and form a blot in our history in all time to come. Something has been hinted at of a treaty of amnesty. I will only say, that unless it be guaranteed by something more trustworthy than the oath of Don Miguel, no man ought to rely upon it.

The House divided: For Lord Palmerston's motion, 73. Against it, 150.

MR. HUSKISSON'S EXPOSITION OF THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

March 16.

This day, Mr. E. D. Davenport moved, "that the Petitions presented to the House, complaining of the Distresses of various classes of the Community, be referred to a Committee of the whole House, with a view to inquire into the causes of their grievances and the remedy thereof." Upon which, Sir Charles Burrell moved, as an amendment, "that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the causes of the national distress, and whether any and what remedies can be applied."

Mr. HUSKISSON rose, and spoke in substance as follows:—

Sir;—The principal arguments which have hitherto been adduced in favour of the motion,—I might, indeed,

say the whole—by those who have given it an unqualified support, turn upon some undefined alteration, which they wish to effect in our Currency.

The honourable baronet who immediately preceded me, has ventured into the field of prophecy. He predicts, that we must, ere long, come to one of these alternatives—either a depreciation of the currency, by a return to an inconvertible paper circulation, or a national bankruptcy. The honourable baronet fortifies himself in this prediction by quoting one from Mr. Hume, whom he describes as a true prophet, for having foretold, in his Essay upon Public Credit, "that bankruptcy would be, at no distant period, the inevitable result of the extension of our debt." Many years have elapsed—more than seventy—since this prediction of the philosopher was given to the world. I hope that the honourable baronet may, for as many years, continue to survive his prophesy, and to serve his country; but however long his life may be, I trust that many more years will pass away, as in the case of Mr. Hume, before the honourable baronet is found to have been a truer prophet than his predecessor has proved.

Now, Sir, I trust that neither the honourable member for Shaftesbury, who has originated this motion, nor my honourable friend, the member for Shoreham, who has moved the amendment, will consider that I am wanting in respect to them, if I decline to argue, at any length, the state of our Currency, in reference to the alterations which were made in it, between the origin of its derangement in 1797 and its final restoration in 1819. From the period of the Bullion Committee, of which I was a member, in 1810, I have so often had occasion to state my opinions on this—the great, though not the only, source, of the difficulties of the country—that I willingly leave to others the task of following the honourable gentlemen upon this exhausted subject. I will only

state, that in 1819, when the Bill, now called Mr. Peel's Act, was brought in, I was unavoidably kept away from the house by illness; otherwise I should have given to that measure my active and cordial support. In 1822, when a motion was brought forward by the honourable member for Essex, for revising that act, and altering the standard of value, I had an opportunity of stating very fully my sentiments upon the subject. To that motion I moved an Amendment in the following words, "That this House will not alter the standard of the gold and silver coins of this realm, in weight, fineness, or denomination."* In this amendment, after two nights' debate, the House concurred, by a majority of 194 to 30.

If this, Sir, was the resolution of the House, three years only after the act of 1819, how much more ought we to adhere to it in 1830! The greatest of all curses, to an opulent and commercial country, is a system of vacillation, unsteadiness, and alternation in its standard of value, frequently disturbing and unsettling the property and fortunes of individuals, and destroying the foundation of confidence and security in all contracts and pecuniary dealings between man and man, as well as in the honour and good faith of the government. I wish I could say, that there are no other causes connected with our Currency (even as it now is), which, by affecting commercial credit, render alternations in its value far too frequent, and which I think it ought to be our duty to endeavour to correct.

Were I prepared to admit—which I certainly am not—that in 1819 we should have been justified in lowering the standard of our currency, instead of simply restoring it, I must not the less contend, that we can exercise no such discretion now. I know there are many well-informed persons who take a different view from me of the course which we might have pursued in 1819, when we had to make a choice upon this subject. It is quite

* See vol. ii. p. 166.

consistent in them; thinking that we committed an error in 1819, to maintain, as most of them, I believe, do, that it is now better to endure the evils which that error has brought upon us, than to venture to disturb the settlement once made, at the risk of all the disquietude, alarm, and derangement, which would inevitably attend such an attempt. From the prevalence of this feeling, I am not afraid that any such attempt will find many partisans in this House; and I own that I consider it a necessary preliminary to the efficacy of every suggestion of relief, that we should, if possible, pronounce ourselves so decidedly on the permanence of our present monetary system, as finally to set at rest all hopes and fears on this too long agitated question.

There is one branch, indeed, of this subject which does not, I admit, involve any necessary alteration in the standard of our currency: I mean, the circulation of one pound notes, convertible into coin upon demand. Their suppression rests upon distinct grounds. It is manifest that notes, of the same denomination with our principal gold coin, cannot be allowed, without the effect being to drive the latter out of circulation. Such, therefore, would be the consequence of small notes being again permitted. Upon the first excitement in trade, leading to a general improvement in prices, these notes would be largely issued to facilitate speculations. The foreign exchanges, for a time, would not be materially affected, because these speculations, as far as they led to payments abroad, would be provided for by the exportation of our gold coin. In this mode, the greater part of our coin, as well that deposited in the Bank, as that in circulation, might gradually disappear, the exchanges still remaining very slightly affected. The importation of foreign goods would be promoted by this large exportation of our coin, and by the rise of all commodities in this country. Every

thing would appear prosperous; but the prosperity would be short-lived and delusive. The time would come in which the Bank of England, alarmed for its own safety by the lowering of its treasure, would be under the necessity of taking decisive measures to protect itself. The effect would be a renewal of the panic of 1825, and of all the miserable consequences by which it has been followed. If, therefore, we make up our minds again to encourage the circulation of small notes, we must be prepared for one of these alternatives—either their paving the way for, and gradually leading to, another Bank Restriction (from which we so narrowly escaped at the end of the year 1825),—or for alternations of fictitious prosperity, such as immediately preceded that crisis, to be followed by overwhelming distress, such as that by which it was terminated. Upon this ground, it is a great satisfaction to me to find, that his Majesty's Government have resolved to maintain the suppression of one pound notes in England; not because they are in themselves depreciation, but because, so long as they are suffered to exist, you can only escape the greater calamity of restriction, leading to an incontrovertible paper currency, by the evil only second to it in degree, that of such a calamity as befell us in the autumn of 1825.

Looking to the motion, however, in its more general character, I am not one of those who have underrated the present distress. The numerous petitions attest its existence, and a document, recently distributed to the members of this House, is unfortunately no slight confirmation that their allegations are but too well founded. The document to which I allude, is, "An Account of the monthly amount of the sums paid in and paid out, on account of Savings' Banks, for the last two years." The year 1828 exhibits the following amounts—paid in, 945,448*l.*—drawn out, 678,120*l.*:—the year 1829, paid in, 449,493—drawn

out, 1,444,937*l.* The figures,* and the comparison which they afford, speak for themselves, and must be taken as a strong indication of the increasing difficulties of the laborious classes in the year 1829. But whilst I acknowledge, and deeply lament, the intensity of suffering and misery which have been endured in many quarters, especially during the last severe winter, I cannot take that gloomy and hopeless view of our situation, to which some appear to yield themselves up. I never can believe, that a country like England, however crippled for a time by some derangement in the system of its interior economy, can be reduced, all at once, to a state of helpless weakness, and irremediable decay. I have a more just reliance upon the sources of our wealth and power, in every branch which constitutes the substantial riches and real strength of the country, its agriculture, its commerce, its manufactures, its immense accumulation of fixed capital, the energy of our national character, and the indefatigable industry of an ingenious, enterprising, and orderly population. I have a further ground of well founded confidence for the present, and of sanguine hope for the future, in an enlightened public opinion, exercising every year more and more, under the benefits of free discussion, its salutary influence upon the councils of ministers, as well as upon the deliberations of Parliament. There is no man, I think, who can read the signs of the times, who can recollect the occurrences of the last, or who witnesses those of the present session—those I might say which have marked the present week,—without feeling this consolation. This growth of intelligence, it is true, is not in itself either productive industry or national wealth: but it is the shield which protects both against the encroachments of power, and the

* This difference has, in some degree, been since accounted for by a change in the law, and in the reduction of the rate of interest allowed by Government, which took place in November 1828.

errors of empiricism. It is the finger-post, which, in the hour of doubt and difficulty, points the path of safety, and guides us in the career of rational improvement.

Admitting then, as I do, the existence of distress, but hoping, at the same time, that, for the present at least, we have seen its worst, it still becomes my duty, whilst I cling to that hope, to inquire into the causes which, in the midst of profound peace, have produced such frequent recurrences of public embarrassment.

It appears to me, Sir,—and it is well known to several of my right honourable friends, that my opinion is of much longer standing that the present emergency,—that the main difficulty, not an occasional, but rather an habitual difficulty, under which this country labours, is the too great pressure upon the springs and sources of productive industry: and that this pressure, from the very circumstance of its being too great in ordinary times, becomes excessive, and is subject to fits of exacerbation, from any incidental casualty, such as an ungenial season, or a temporary derangement in any considerable branch of our manufactures or trade. To a casualty of this description we must always be liable, but it ought not to reduce us to suffering like that which we now endure, if we had been before in a robust and healthy condition.

If I am asked the cause of the habitual existence of this too great pressure, I can only state the impression of my own mind. It is simply this, that, in the distribution of the annual income of the country, by which I mean everything, having value in exchange, that is raised and produced by the labour of its inhabitants, and from which fund are derived the subsistence, the comforts, and the enjoyments of all, from the monarch to the peasant,—I say that, in its distribution, the portion of it reserved for reproduction is now, and has been for some years, less than it ought to be, either for the well-being of the la-

bouring classes—the immediate instrument of that reproduction,—or for the due maintenance, and progressive growth, of the capitals by which their labour is called into active exertion.

I am aware that, in this statement, I have only said in other words, that the wages of labour have been too low, and the profits of fructifying or productive capital less than they ought to be: but there is an advantage, in a discussion like the present, in describing these evils, so as to trace them to their elementary causes.

Many concurrent circumstances have contributed, since the restoration of peace, to produce this unsatisfactory state of things. Over some of the causes to which it may be traced, we have, from different reasons, little or no control: for instance, we cannot regulate the course of the seasons, or the competition of other countries with the products of our own in the foreign market. Neither can we interpose our authority—God forbid we should!—to stop the progress of improvement in mechanical or chemical science, or to interfere between landlord and tenant or in the other pecuniary dealings of society. To the consequences of other causes of difficulty we have deliberately submitted, as the only way of escaping from far greater evils; for instance, in putting an end to an inconvertible paper currency.

But there are causes which, if they have produced any part of the evil, are completely within our control. I allude now to that change in our commercial policy, to which so much of our present distress has been ascribed, by clamour out of doors, and by more than one speaker in this debate. When people are suffering, nothing is more easy, and, with superficial observers, more common, than to raise, or join in, any cry which saves the trouble of thinking. Free Trade, as it has been absurdly nicknamed, by those who use words without knowing what they them-

selves mean, has in this way been denounced by the disappointed selfishness of some, and adopted without consideration by others, as the source of all our difficulties. It has been so designated by the honourable Alderman,* one of the members for the City of London, by the honourable members for Cornwall and Newark, and by others; but none of these honourable members ever condescend to tell us what they mean, or understand, by Free Trade. It is of this that I have before complained, and that I again complain on this occasion. Do they know the changes which have been made in our commercial policy, since the restoration of peace? If they do, why not point out to this house specifically the alterations of which they disapprove, and move, as it is fully competent for them to do, for the repeal of the particular Acts by which they have been effected, and for the revival of Acts, now no longer upon the Statute Book, by which industry and trade would again be placed under their former regulations? Would not this course be more consistent with the straitforward duty of legislation, than to give their countenance to a senseless clamour, and to keep up delusion and irritation among a suffering people, instead of making any attempt to administer that relief, which, if they have faith in their own declamations, it is in their power to propose? I say now, as I have said before, it is the duty of those gentlemen to tell us, intelligibly and in detail, what it is that has been done which ought to be undone, and what they would substitute for that which is now in existence. Every challenge of this sort they have hitherto declined, forgetting that it is scarcely fair to arraign a system which they are not prepared to amend, and that they are sent here, not to aggravate what is wrong by inflammatory denunciations, but to correct it by calm counsel and appropriate remedies. This is a duty which they cannot expect to devolve upon those who differ with them

* Alderman Waithman.

in principle; and if they are not prepared to act upon it themselves, their omission is equally unjustifiable towards those who concur in their opinions, and towards Parliament, of which the measures are the objects of their obloquy and abuse; and when I say Parliament, perhaps, as the individual in this House most immediately responsible for those measures, and who, as such, has come in for the greatest share of that obloquy and abuse, I too may be allowed personally to complain of the injustice towards myself of this continued dereliction of their duty. Six or seven hundred statutes, passed for improving the commerce and industry of the country by a system of protection, prohibition, restriction, and interference, have been repealed. How many of these laws do they propose to re-enact? Or do they wish to revive the whole, with all their vexatious, conflicting, frequently contradictory, and invariably absurd, regulations? Do they wish again to introduce prohibition as a principle for the encouragement of trade, and to revive monopoly as a benefit to the consumer? If they do, in God's name, let them make the attempt, and let Parliament, under the guidance of common sense and public opinion, decide between the advocates of such a system, and the support of what they deride, but dare not discuss, as the system of Free Trade.

The honourable Baronet who spoke last indeed, the member for the county of Cornwall, has denounced that system as one which has for its sole object to *force* exports. There cannot be a more mistaken view of the subject. A forcing system, either of exports or imports, is altogether at variance with the policy which it has been my duty to recommend. That policy has been rather to put an end to such a system, and without any forcing, to leave to individuals to follow their own views, to regulate their own speculations, and to consult their own interests. This I consider to be a general rule, applicable alike to the industry

and the commerce of the country. Exceptions to it may be justified upon grounds of special expediency; but they ought to be watched with the more jealousy, as every such exception is a departure from that course which, in the long-run, must be most conducive to public prosperity.

We are told, indeed, by the honourable Alderman, and others of his school, who cannot deny that the quantity of goods exported of late years has greatly increased, that the more you export, the greater your loss; and the foundation of this almost ludicrous doctrine is, that the aggregate value of such exports has diminished in a greater proportion than the quantity exported has increased. Do the advocates of this doctrine seriously mean to contend, that our export trade, upon an average, is a losing concern, and that it goes on increasing, year after year, in proportion as it becomes more and more unprofitable? When I ask them this question, I do not mean to deny that some adventures have been attended with loss; that upon others the profit has been very small; but I cannot believe that men of common sense, prudence, and calculation, would, for a great length of time, persevere, much less that they should voluntarily increase their speculations, in any trade, when the amount of loss and not of profit (however low the latter) was to be measured by the scale of such speculations. In fact, Sir, I have one short answer to the tenets of that school of which the honourable Alderman and the honourable member for Newark are now the acknowledged chiefs. It is this,—If you resort at all to the foreign market, you must be content to sell your commodities for the prices which you can procure in competition with the like articles, the produce of any other countries. You cannot control their capital,—you cannot regulate their industry—and do you expect to improve the chance of meeting them at equal prices, by subjecting your own people to restraints and burthens, from which those with whom they have to com-

pete are free? The honourable Alderman, therefore, must make his election; either our export trade must cease, or we must be content with the price which the foreign market will yield. The purchaser in that market concerns himself very little about the cost of production here, or elsewhere; quality and price are the considerations by which he is governed, in his choice between the British and the foreign competitor. Now, if this be the principle which regulates every foreign market to which our merchants resort, does it not follow, as a necessary consequence that the price, in our own market, of every article, the like of which we export for foreign consumption, must be regulated by the selling price abroad? If the price abroad be permanently depressed, the home price must partake of that depression. This must be my first answer to those who tell us, that the home market of the country is every thing, the only market deserving of encouragement. The home trade must, of necessity, be of great importance and value; but it has been sacrificed, ruined, and put down (we are told) by the forcing and encouragement given, under the new system, to our export trade. To maintain this position the following argument, if argument it can be called, is had recourse to. The increase of our export trade has been followed by a more than proportionate decrease of the home trade; by forcing the one you have injured the other, and the result is, that both have become unprofitable. I know not how to measure the home trade, except by the home consumption. It may be difficult, especially for an individual like myself, unaided by the facilities which office affords, to ascertain accurately the amount of that consumption. I have, however, endeavoured, by a reference to the returns to this House, and with the aid of some most intelligent friends in the mercantile line, to collect information upon this point; and I will now, with the permission of the House, state the

result. I have selected articles of the most extensive use in the manufactures of this country, and I have made my comparison upon the consumption of five years; namely, from 1816 (I select this as the year of the highest return) to 1820, both inclusive, and in like manner for the last five years, from 1824 to 1828.

The first article to which I shall refer is Cotton Wool. The average annual importation, from 1816 to 1820, was 139,141,646 lbs.:—the average annual importation from 1824 to 1828 was 210,886,992 lbs. The average annual exportation of Cotton Wool for the same periods was, for the first, 11,873,800 lbs., for the second, 21,298,800 lbs.; leaving of Cotton Wool for manufacture in this country, an annual average, for the first period, of 127,267,846 lbs.; and for the second, 189,588,192 lbs. These respective quantities were disposed of in each period, in the manufactured state, as nearly as can be ascertained, as follows: first—Cotton Yarn exported (one-eighth being added for waste), the annual average of the first period, 19,984,664 lbs.—in the second period, 48,472,202 lbs.:—secondly—Cotton Cloth exported (computing six yards of cloth of all kinds to be produced from one pound of cotton), annual average of the first period, 255,507,058 yards—in the second period, 360,265,256 yards:—thirdly,—Cotton Cloth retained for home consumption (computing one pound of cotton to make five yards of cloth), in the first period, 227,003,484 yards—in the second period, 399,678,923 yards. I may here just observe, that the estimate of six yards to the pound of cotton for foreign, and of five for home, consumption, is supposed to be the nearest approach to accuracy, by those who are practically most conversant with the manufacture

The next article is Sheep's Wool. The annual average importation of the first period is 14,443,834 lbs.;—of the second, 28,356,417 lbs.: retained for home use, in the first

period, 14,430,917 lbs.;—in the second, 27,629,561 lbs.: official value of woollens exported in the first period—annual average, 5,313,429*l.*;—in the second, 5,763,632*l.* Now, the principal quantity of the wool imported is of the finer qualities; and as the increase of export in the manufactured articles of woollen cloth is very trifling, it follows that a great increase of consumption must have taken place in this country; unless it be maintained (which it certainly cannot, the reverse being the fact), that the growth of British Wool has been diminished in a degree corresponding with the increased foreign supply. The increased home consumption is principally in fine cloth made of Saxon and the high-priced wools.

The next article of import is Silk. The averages are as follows—Raw and waste, from 1816 to 1820, 1,444,090 lbs. —thrown ditto, 303.126 lbs.—from 1824 to 1828, Raw and waste, 3,437,432 lbs.;—thrown, 447,504 lbs.;—the export of manufactured silk goods has varied very little, upon a comparison of these two periods.

The importation of Flax is, for the first period, 368,371 cwt.;—for the second, 830,421 cwt. I have not been able to obtain any satisfactory information as to the quantity of Linen Cloth exported, but there can be no doubt of a greatly increased consumption at home.

Hides, in the first period, imported, 679,996;—re-exported, 221,200; retained for Home use, 458,796;—in the second period, imported, 1,873,314;—re-exported, 211,448;—retained for home use, 1,661,866.

The next articles are Tallow and Palm Oil, for the manufacture of candles and soap. Imported in the first period, of tallow, 545,540 cwt.—palm oil, 34,910 cwt.—soap exported, official valuation, 116,037*l.*;—candles exported, weight, 4,931,597 lbs.:—second period, tallow imported, 946,760 cwt.—palm oil, 95,942 cwt.—soap exported, official value, 183,849*l.*; candles exported, weight, 7,818,718 lbs.

The last article which I shall mention is that of fir Timber; the annual average import of the first period was 289,379 loads:—in the second, for four years, ending 1827 (I have not been able to procure the return for 1828), 541,654 loads.

There remains, however, one other branch of our national wealth and industry, to which I must advert before I quit this part of the subject. From its importance, both in a commercial and political point of view, I could not pass it over, even if it had been omitted by the honourable members who have preceded me in this debate. I allude, Sir, to our Shipping, which is stated to be fast verging to decay and ruin. If it had been asserted, that the profits of the Ship-Owner were very greatly diminished, as compared to the period of war, and that they were small, even when calculated upon the present reduced value of the ship, I certainly should not deny the position. I regret that the returns of capital in this, as in other branches of productive industry, are less than I could wish them to be; but when the interest of money and the profits of stock are generally low, it would be vain to expect that the capital employed in Shipping should form an exception. Indeed, from circumstances peculiar to the shipping interest, it was likely to suffer a greater revulsion than any other from the restoration of peace.

At the close of the war, our shipping had engrossed the navigation of other countries; and near one-sixth of the tonnage of our merchant ships was employed in the public service as transports. The commerce and navigation of other nations are now returned to their usual course in peace, and nine-tenths of our transports have been discharged from the public service. By the Returns, which were laid before the House of Commons in the course of last session, it would appear, that, in the year 1816, we

had 25,864 registered vessels, measuring 2,783,940 tons;—and that in 1828, the number of registered vessels was only 24,095, measuring 2,508,191 tons. This diminution has been commented upon, as shewing conclusively the gradual and melancholy decline of the Shipping Interest. It is, perhaps, scarcely worth while to observe, that by the same Return the tonnage appears to have been reduced, so early as 1823, to 2,506,760 tons;—that in 1827, it is stated at 2,460,500 tons;—being in the first of these two years, a trifle, and in the second 48,000 tons less than in the year 1828. But it is more material to state, that in the year 1816, the amount of tonnage was swelled by returning many ships which had long ceased to exist, and that at present the Returns are accurately made.

There is another parliamentary paper, however, which was also furnished last session, and which, if properly considered, in conjunction with that to which I have now referred, will throw great and very satisfactory light upon this subject. It is the paper which exhibits the number and tonnage of British vessels, entered inwards and cleared outwards, in our trade with all foreign parts, for the same period as the former paper, namely, from 1814 to 1828, both inclusive. We have already seen that in 1816 the total tonnage of our registered shipping was 2,783,940: now, in that year, the total tonnage entered inwards from all foreign parts was 1,415,723—cleared outwards to all foreign parts, 1,340,277 tons—making together 2,756,000—being a fraction more than one ton of shipping for every ton of goods entered inwards and cleared outwards. In 1828 our whole tonnage, as I have already stated, was 2,508,191; but in that year the entries inward were 2,094,357—and the clearances outwards 2,096,397—making together 4,190,754 tons, being somewhat less than five-eighths of a ton of registered shipping to every ton of goods entered inwards and cleared outwards, and being, moreover, a posi-

tive increase upon the entries and clearances of 1816, to the amount of 1,434,754 tons;—rather more than either of them separately amounted to in that year. I might further state, that the account of vessels entered inwards and cleared outwards for 1829 has been delivered this morning, and is as follows:—inwards 2,184,535—outwards 2,063,179, making together 4,247,714 tons,—an increase, as the House will perceive, upon the antecedent year. Now I need scarcely remark to the House, that the quantity of goods, carried to and fro between this country and all foreign parts, in British ships, within a given period, is the true measure of the degree of employment and activity of our commercial marine. If our ships had been navigated backwards and forwards, at the same rate of movement in 1828 as in 1816, it would have required upwards of 4,200,000 tons to have executed the transference of goods, which, in 1828, was performed by 2,500,000 tons of registered shipping.—On the other hand, if the accelerated movement of 1828 had prevailed in 1816, the transference of goods which, in that year, required 2,783,940 tons, might have been accomplished by about 1,700,000 tons of registered shipping. If gentlemen think this change a misfortune, nothing can be more easy than to rectify it. We have only to restore the vexatious and contradictory laws, partly fiscal, partly protective, as they were called, partly commercial, which threw impediments and delays in the way of our commerce and navigation. We have only to take care that ships should not load and unload, make their entries, and obtain their clearances, with the present ease and dispatch. We have only to restore in our Custom-Houses the regulations which harassed the ship-owner and the merchant, and to provide that the convenience and expedition, now so conspicuous in our commercial docks, should be so checked, and encumbered with dilatory forms and useless interference, as to bring us back to the more sober pace of our former system.

This is a task which I can scarcely be called upon to undertake; let those who arraign these improvements as ruinous innovations, propose their repeal, and thus bring the two systems to a fair issue.

But, before they attempt to effect their purpose, let them calculate the results to the Shipping Interest. In trade, the economy of time will always be found to be the economy of money. Every restraint is an increased expenditure of the one or the other. It adds, in more ways than one, to the charge at which the raw material can be delivered to our manufacturers, and the manufactured article conveyed to the foreign market. It operates as a premium in favour of rival manufactures, and as a tax upon our own. From what fund is that premium to be drawn, and that tax paid, except from the profits of the manufacturer's capital, and the wages of the labourer whom he employs? For, as was well observed by the gallant member for Windsor, the price in the foreign market, be it what it may, must determine the price in our own market. If we are beaten in this race of competition, we shall want fewer carriers to effect the interchange of the products of our industry, against the raw materials of other countries. And how is the Shipping Interest to be benefited by the curtailment of our foreign trade?

The truth is, that, under all the difficulties with which our general industry, including our shipping, has had to contend, since the restoration of peace—difficulties growing out of the enormous expenditure of war—the necessary restoration of our currency—and the active rivalry of other nations—nothing but a timely relaxation of our restrictive and expensive system, would have enabled us to bear up against the complicated disadvantages of our situation. That relaxation, so far as it has gone—and it ought to go further—has been gradually introduced, with due regard to the interests and arrangements which had

grown up under a different system. But for the intervention of so many years of war, and of a war so peculiar in its character, these improvements would have been introduced, not only at an earlier period, but with less of friction and embarrassment in carrying them into effect. For I can take upon myself to affirm, from personal knowledge of Mr. Pitt's sentiments and views, that there was nothing which he more regretted, in the derangement of war, than the interruption which it gave to the improvement of our commercial policy,—an improvement, which he looked to in the temperate and cautious liberation of trade and industry, from all unnecessary shackles and impediments.

These arguments, Sir, may have little weight with that select class, who claim to be, exclusively, our practical guides in political economy. With them, foreign commerce is a matter almost of indifference: according to them, England can be great, happy, and flourishing, within herself. Of what England they are speaking, I know not; certainly not of *this country*, as it now exists. The raw materials of every great branch of our industry (mineral wealth excepted) are derived, either wholly, or in great part, from foreign soils. Cotton,—which gives employment to perhaps two millions of people—wholly. Silk, which employs about 500,000,—wholly. Wool, in great proportion.—Hemp and Flax, in a proportion still greater. —Fir Timber for all building purposes, nearly the whole.— Dyeing Drugs, the same.—I say nothing of luxuries, such as wine, &c. But, looking only to the articles which I have enumerated, I would ask—are gentlemen prepared to dispense with the comforts which the use of them here affords to our population? And if they are, are they still urther prepared to tell us how that population could be maintained, if the conversion of these raw materials did not give employment to their industry? With what but that manufactured industry can we purchase them from other

countries? Have we any superfluous raw materials of our own, with which to make the purchase? Where is the spare corn, or the spare produce of our soil, which can be sent abroad for this purpose? No, Sir, of these productions we do not grow enough for our own wants. Our population, then, so far as it is employed in working up the raw materials of other countries, must find in its own industry the means of procuring those raw materials. Without them, that industry must cease; that population (it amounts to millions) must perish; and then indeed, England—but not England great, happy, and flourishing—England, reduced to its former insignificance and barbarism—may disregard foreign trade.

If, then, relief is not to be looked for by undoing, but rather by persevering in and extending, our present system of commercial policy; our next inquiry must be, how far that relief is attainable by a revision of the Finances of the country. Within the limits of public faith, the amount of our taxation is under our control; and in respect to the mode in which it is assessed, distributed, and raised, the whole public revenue may be considered as liable to whatever alterations the wisdom of Parliament may find expedient.

First, then, with respect to its positive amount, under the altered circumstances of the country, since the restoration of peace. I had occasion to state my opinion on this subject to the Committee upon Agricultural Distress in 1821, and as it is recorded in their Report, I beg leave very shortly to refer to it. It is as follows:—

"Your Committee cannot disguise from themselves, that the weight of the public burthens of the country, their nominal amount remaining the same, must be more severely felt, in proportion as the money incomes derived from trading, farming, and manufacturing capital and industry are diminished. No exertion, therefore, should be omitted

to endeavour to reduce those burthens, as nearly as circumstances will permit, in the degree in which such incomes have been reduced: for, in considering this subject, it is important to bear in mind, that the general amount and real pressure of taxation have been positively increased in the proportion of the improved value of our currency."

I still retain that opinion; indeed, every thing which has since occurred has only tended to confirm it. The course at which it points is obvious. It is that which, I willingly admit, is now followed by his Majesty's Government. Credit is due to them for the retrenchments, certainly not inconsiderable, which they have already made, as well as for the new checks which they have established, and the further ones which they contemplate, for repressing that tendency to the growth of expenditure, which constantly prevails in every department of the public service. A tendency which, as it pervades all branches of expenditure, requires to be steadily watched, and kept within bounds—of late years it appears to have been most vivacious, if I may use the expression, in that branch which is familiarly called the Dead Weight.

After all the details and explanations upon this subject, which I have heard with satisfaction from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I remain of opinion, that the proposed regulations ought, in some instances, to be drawn somewhat tighter, and that retrenchment may be carried considerably further. The Government has once gone over the wide field of expenditure, but what they have cut down is not adequate to the wants and expectations of the country. Let them repeat the operation, and they will find that more than gleanings are left behind. In the collection and management of the revenue, it was admitted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, there is still room for reduction and reform. The diplomatic and consular establishment may be pared down without detriment to the public service.

The door of admission to half pay, retired allowances, and superannuations of every sort, must be further straitened and narrowed. A careful revision of the Colonial Establishments will afford a considerable saving. The expences incurred on the coast of Africa ought, on every consideration, to be greatly diminished. The laxity of control over the appropriation of the revenue arising from Crown Lands calls for revision. This branch of the revenue, as much as the Customs or Excise, constitutes a part of the consolidated fund, subject to the expences of management. Under this head of Management it may be proper to include the expence of the maintaining, repairing, and keeping up that part of the Crown Estate, which is expressly reserved for the recreation or state of the monarch, such as parks, lodges, &c.; but as in the Civil List, so in this instance, a specific annual sum ought to be allotted for that purpose; not to be exceeded without an application to, and an express vote of, the House of Commons.

There are also the savings which may, I hope, be effected in the great heads of our expence, the military and naval establishments of the country. I have made no objections to the estimates for the Army and Navy this year. In fixing the numbers, the Government, acting upon their information and responsibility, have a right to expect some degree of confidence from the House; especially if, from circumstances of notoriety, it should appear that, in the pending concerns of the world, some matters remain to be adjusted, and that every thing is not in its right place. If, by the next year, the mists which surround us shall be dissipated, if the political horizon shall be, on every side, clear and bright, if Ireland shall continue—as I am confident it will—to improve in its internal tranquillity, and in good feelings towards this country, I should, in the ensuing session, expect no inconsiderable reduction in the amount of our public force.

Whatever savings may be effected in all these branches of expenditure, or in any other, they will add so much to our relief. But, when the whole of the charge over which we can exercise any immediate control, is not more than 11,000,000*l.*, the further reduction which remains practicable, to be consistent with the public safety, and the efficiency of Government, cannot be very considerable. Indeed, I much doubt whether, if we are to retain a reasonable surplus of revenue,—I will not say upon the principle of a sinking fund, but as the necessary guard and provision against the effect of those fluctuations to which our public income is liable,—any further absolute reduction of taxation can be anticipated, from the utmost amount of retrenchment that can be made, unless the produce of the remaining taxes should be very greatly encreased, in consequence of the relief now to be given to the people.

I will shortly state the grounds of this opinion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer estimates the surplus of the present year at about 2,600,000*l.* I will take for granted the data upon which this estimate was made. I hope my right honourable friend will not think that I am doing him a disservice, when I remark, that he has under-stated the extent of relief which he is about to give to the country. He estimates it at 3,400,000*l.*: now, the average net payment into the Exchequer from the duties about to be taken off, for a period of the last five years, was 3,737,000*l.*; and as the barley crop failed in one of those years, 1827, I think it may be taken in round numbers at 3,750,000*l.*, leaving, consequently, a deficiency upon the estimated surplus of this year of 1,150,000*l.* Now, if the reduction of the 4 per cents., taken at 700,000*l.*, the new taxes proposed by my right honourable friend, estimated at 400,000*l.*, and the further savings to be made, should amount altogether to 2,000,000*l.*, our surplus would be rather less than 1,000,000*l.*,

being an allowance of about two per cent. upon our income, to meet all the incidents and casualties to which it is liable.

Assuming, then, that absolute abatement of taxation cannot, for the present at least, be carried further, the question which remains for consideration (and I can assure the House that I have anxiously turned it in my own mind, in the interval since the Budget was made known to us) is, will the proposed remission be all that is requisite for the effectual and permanent relief of the country? I am sorry to say that I incline to think it will not. In the view which I take of our present difficulties, the main cause of them, in my opinion, as stated at the outset of what I have now addressed to the House, and which, that I may not be misunderstood, in substance I repeat, is this—that in the distribution of the annual wealth of the country, taking it according to the ordinary and admitted division into rent, profits of stock, and wages of labour, the two latter, from a complication of concurrent circumstances, of which taxation is one, are now in the receipt of less than their just share. I may further state, that such a condition of society cannot long be continued, without its laying the foundation of national impoverishment. There is a short passage in Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," which so forcibly points out the calamitous tendency of this condition of society, that I cannot forbear pressing it upon the serious attention of the House. "To complain," he says, "of the liberal reward of labour, is to lament over the necessary effect and cause of the greatest public prosperity. The condition of the labourer is hard in the stationary, and miserable in the declining state. The progressive state is in reality the cheerful and the hearty state to all the different orders of society. The stationary is dull—the declining melancholy."

If we are in danger of falling into this state of things,

and if we cannot be adequately protected against the risk by any practical diminution in the positive amount of our burthens, may we not guard ourselves against it by some change in the principle and distribution of the remaining taxation?

In approaching this part of the subject, I am aware that I am treading upon tender ground. I know that I shall not only meet with great difference of opinion, but that I shall expose myself, probably, to considerable clamour and obloquy. It is impossible to touch upon it without coming into collision with the interests (at least as the parties understand them) of many, and those, perhaps, the most powerful both in this House and in the country. But, Sir, when I am addressing you upon a subject of such deep importance, I feel myself bound by a sense of public duty, be the consequence to myself personally what it may, to state a strong doubt (I wish to put it no higher), whether we shall afford adequate relief, without removing a larger amount of those taxes which press directly upon income arising from capital engaged in industry, and upon the income of labour to which that capital gives employment;—transferring, as far as may be indispensable, the burthen upon all that class of income which arises from capital not so employed.

Sir, my gallant friend, the member for Windsor, has called upon us to compare the habits of society, in the higher walks of life, with what they were fifty years ago. Like him, and with him, I have lived long enough to bear testimony to the change which has taken place. Let any man compare the metropolis now with what it was at that period; not only its positive growth, but still more the extension of splendor in buildings, in furniture, in plate, in the habits of luxury, and in display of every description. Having mentioned plate, Sir, I may remark, as a striking evidence of this change, the difference of the amount of the

duty upon that one article, between the year 1804 and the last year. The rate of duty upon silver wrought plate in 1804 was 1*s.* 3*d.*, upon gold 16*s.* per ounce; it was afterwards raised to 1*s.* 6*d.* upon silver, and to 17*s.* upon gold. But what has been the increase in the net produce of the duty? It has risen from less than 5,000*l.* in 1804, to upwards of 105,000*l.* in 1828; a rise of more than twenty-fold, notwithstanding the greatly diminished supply from the mines, and the consequent encreasing value, of the precious metals. It may be further remarked, that this augmented consumption shows how large a portion of gold and silver is annually diverted from the purposes of coin to those of ornament and luxury.

Have the articles most necessary to the scanty comfort of the humble dwellings of the labouring classes been multiplied in the same proportion? I am afraid that, in too many cases, an inverse ratio would rather be the correct answer. Look at the earnings and condition of that population which raises the produce of the soil, or from early dawn to midnight throws the shuttle for bare subsistence, and compare them with those of the artisans, who minister to all the various enjoyments and gratifications of wealth, in this great town. Contrast the hourly dealings for millions, at that great mart of money, the Stock Exchange, with the stinted transactions and falling-off of our country markets. In London the bankers, the monied men of all descriptions, complain of the glut of money. We hear of seven or eight millions deposited, for want of employment, in the Bank of England alone. Ingenuity is incessantly at work in devising new and tempting speculations, to call forth these locked-up capitals, of which too large a portion has already been thrown away upon rash and gambling speculations, or placed at hazard upon the precarious security of foreign loans. In the country, you hear of nothing but the bewailings of industry, and the want of money,

confidence, and credit. The country banker reluctant to make advances, and the prudent man, who is still solvent, cautious and tardy in applying for them, because productive speculation, however carefully conducted, holds out too little prospect of gain to compensate for the risk of loss, with which, more or less, it must always be attended. It is notorious to all, who know what is passing in the different counties of the kingdom, that country banks,—in better times those salutary reservoirs for the alternate deposit and distribution of circulating wealth, through all the ramifications of active industry—now send that wealth up to town, to be lent for short periods upon stock, and other floating securities upon the Stock Exchange. This system is, perhaps, safe for themselves, but, at best, of very doubtful benefit to the public; affording, for aught I know, to a few individuals increased facilities for gigantic speculations; swelling still further the already overgrown fortunes of some, but bringing misery and ruin upon others; and diverting the thoughts and aspirations of all who come within its vortex, from the sober and steady courses of their forefathers, to pursuits as little conducive, I believe, to individual happiness and moral worth, as they certainly are to the growth of wealth in the country; pursuits which, were they multiplied even an hundred-fold, could never add the value of one pepper-corn to our national resources; whilst all the classes, from whom alone wealth can really flow, are labouring under difficulties, and complaining of distress.

In considering the effects of our present taxation upon the productive industry of the country, we must constantly bear in mind the necessary consequences of a state of peace, and of a free competition of the industry of other countries with that of our own, in the general markets of the world. These consequences, as it has been already so well stated in this debate, are, first,—that we cannot obtain for our

commodities a better price than that at which, in this race of competition, the like commodities can be raised, produced, and brought to market, by other countries; and, secondly,—that the price at which we can sell abroad must determine the price in the home market. Now, Sir, let us follow out these admitted axioms in all their necessary and legitimate bearings and results.

It will not be denied that a spirit of improvement, an anxious desire to promote industry, zeal for the diffusion of knowledge in all pursuits connected with mechanical and chemical science, and in the beneficial application of them to the useful purposes of life, are now the pervading feelings, not only of every people, but of nearly every government, in the civilized world. Neither can it be denied that, in several countries, a greater degree of freedom in their institutions, and a greater security for property, have, under the uninterrupted enjoyment of peace, promoted the growth of capital, and the other facilities which are necessary to manufacturing and commercial enterprise. This is the rivalry, every day growing more formidable, with which our capital, and industry, and skill, have to contend. If we meet it under some advantages, we have also great and growing disadvantages to encounter. Do not let us lose sight of the fearful consequences which must ensue, if we are distanced in the race. The greatest of all follies on such an occasion, would be to shut our eyes to difficulties which, taken in time, we may, perhaps, overcome, but which, by procrastination, we cannot evade. For a long time we have been the greatest manufacturing and trading nation in the world. We export for sale abroad, in a manufactured state, more or less of almost every thing which we raise or produce. Of the raw materials of our soil the export is next to nothing. They are barely adequate, indeed I might say inadequate, to the subsistence of our population. Upon an average of

years, we cannot do without a supply of foreign corn; and of cheese, butter, and other articles we have a large annual importation. Our corn laws, however expedient to prevent other evils, in the present state of the country, are in themselves a burthen and a restraint upon its manufacturing and commercial industry. Whilst the products of that industry must descend to the level of the general market of the world, the producers, so far as food is concerned, are debarred from that level. If the price of subsistence,—that is, the price of those particular articles which we never export, and are frequently compelled to import—be materially dearer here than anywhere else, that dearness cannot be shifted to the articles which we do export. It must fall in the way of deduction, either upon the wages and comforts of the labourer, or upon the profits of those who afford him employment.

Here, then, is one inevitable cause, constantly operating to keep alive a struggle between productive capital and productive labour, with a constant tendency to bring both to a lower level:—because the disadvantage, under which they have to contend, arising from a difference in the price of the necessaries of life, is increased in proportion as the progressive improvement of rival nations approximates their manufacturing skill and industry more nearly to our own. Are not, then, the circumstances, which enhance the price of subsistence in this country, a strong reason why we should endeavour to lighten, as much as possible, other burthens which, by their direct operation, tend to aggravate this disadvantage? See to what an extent your Excise and Customs prove that you do not sufficiently attend to this consideration! Full three-fourths of your revenue are levied under these two heads; and by far the greatest proportion of that amount upon articles necessary, either for the subsistence, the clothing, or the humble comforts of the labourer; or of use in the fabrica-

tion of those articles to which his industry is devoted. Let any man look through the list of the Excise and Customs, even now that the beer and leather taxes are removed, and he will find in how great a degree this observation still applies. Candles, hops, licences, malt, printed goods, soap, British spirits, tea, sugar, tobacco, rum, hemp, timber: here is an enumeration amounting to near 30,000,000*l.*; but the incidental burthen of which, in restraint, impediment, and vexatious interference, may well be estimated at 10,000,000*l.* more.

These are the consequences of monopoly in some cases, as tea for instance, and of the charge of collection, regulation, drawbacks, and such like interference in others. They are, perhaps, unavoidable under the complication of a system, which can only guard against fraud and evasion in the collection of the revenue, by impeding the development of industry, and sacrificing the improvements of science.

It is a common remark, that the rich man does not require more food than his poorer neighbour; the difference between them must be in the quality. But, in many of the articles which I have enumerated, the consumption of the rich is less than that of the poor man. In others, his consumption may be greater, but in an amount altogether disproportioned to their relative means. The proportion, however, in this respect, is not so much the question now, as the different mode in which this system of taxation falls upon realized wealth, and upon productive industry. Every man's observation must satisfy him of the general truth of these remarks. It can scarcely be necessary that I should illustrate them in detail.

In proportion as prices and wages have fallen, has this class of taxes become not only more burthensome, but more vexatious, and more liable to evasion. Take for instance Soap: the duty during the war might be about 70 per cent. upon the raw materials; it is now from 120 to 140 per

cent. If wages have fallen in the same proportion, how much heavier does this tax now press upon the labourer, and how much greater must be the temptation to resort to any means by which the duty may be avoided? If we advert to Sugar, we shall find that the duty, which was formerly one-half of, now exceeds the selling price. Looking to this article, upon which there has been no reduction of duty since the war, and considering the severe and general distress in which all West-India interests are involved, I cannot but regret that a reduction of the sugar duty seems now to be indefinitely postponed. As a measure of relief it is urgent. I still retain the opinion, which I have more than once pressed upon his Majesty's Government, that this relief might be given, without any great or permanent sacrifice of revenue.

It is not to sugar only that this observation would apply. A general revision would point out many other articles, but the subject is one too extensive and too minute for the present occasion. The more general considerations, to which I now claim the attention of the House, are these: first, that no other country in Europe has so large a proportion of its taxation bearing directly upon the incomes of labour and productive capital:—secondly, that in no other country, of the same extent, I think I might say in none of five times the extent of this kingdom, is there so large a mass of income, belonging to those classes who do not directly employ it in bringing forth the produce of labour:—thirdly, that no other country has so large a proportion of its taxation mortgaged;—in proportion to the amount of that mortgage are we interested in any measure which, without injustice to the mortgagee, would tend to lessen the absolute burthen of the mortgage:—fourthly, that from no other country in the world does so large a proportion of the class not engaged in production (including many of the wealthy) spend their incomes in foreign parts. I know I may be told, that,

by taxing that income, you run the risk of driving them to withdraw their capital altogether. My answer is, first, that ninety-nine out of every hundred of these absentees have no such command over the source of their income;—secondly, that the danger is now of another and more alarming description,—that of the productive capitals of this country being transferred to other countries, where they would be secure of a more profitable return. The relief of industry is the remedy against that danger.

One of the objections made to any direct tax upon income, even limited, as I have described, to capital not directly employed in the pursuits of industry, is, that it may be very fit as a war measure, but that it is not suited to a state of peace. My answer is, that this proposition is too general. What may be very well adaped to a state of peace or war under given circumstances, may become inexpedient when the bearing of those circumstances is altogether changed. In war, the wages of labour and the profits of capital may be high. In peace, they may be greatly depressed. In the former supposition, taxes bearing upon industry will be more lightly felt; in the latter, their pressure will be very severe; and, if not alleviated, will daily become more so, by exhausting the very springs of that industry from which they are derived. Let gentlemen seriously weigh in their own minds, whether this be not the risk against which it is most earnest to provide.

I have already shown, upon higher authority than my own—that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer—that the amount remitted by a change in our taxation, would be a very inadequate measure of the real saving, and contingent relief, to industry; whilst, on the other hand, the produce of the tax to be substituted would be commensurate with what it might subtract from the incomes of the classes, by which it would be paid. The landlord, the fundholder, the mortgagee, the annuitant of every descrip-

tion, would moreover be *directly* benefited, to the extent of his consumption of the articles upon which the present taxes might be reduced or abolished. Each would be *indirectly* benefited, by the stimulus and additional ease which would be given to the industrious classes. Take, for instance, the land-owner. Can any man doubt, that in proportion to the relief afforded, would be the means and desire of the industrious classes to consume more of all the productions of the soil, which constitute their habitual comforts and luxuries:—more meat,—more malt,—more cheese—more butter,—and more of all the other articles which cannot be said to be of absolute and primary necessity? Can any man doubt, that the consumption of these articles is now checked, if not actually diminished, by the straitened circumstances of our labouring population? Should their condition become still harder,—and, in order to maintain our competition in the foreign market, I fear that, without the relief which I have suggested it must,—is it not obvious that the consumption of these articles, and, with the consumption, the price must decline?

Should this be the unfortunate career in which we are proceeding, we may have gleams of sunshine, but their transient brightness will not be sufficient to disperse the thickening gloom which will be gathering round us, and in which all interests and all classes will be finally enveloped. For the contentment of the poor man,—for the comfort of the middling classes,—for the enjoyment of the rich,—for the security of all, it becomes the paramount duty of those, to whom the welfare and happiness of the country are committed, well to probe the sources of our present difficulties; and if they are satisfied that they are produced in any considerable degree by the causes to which I have adverted, not to be tardy or timid in applying a remedy.

If I have dwelt upon these subjects at greater length than I had intended, I have done so because I have thought

it my duty, as an unconnected member of Parliament, not to shrink from stating my views respecting them. The position of a minister in this House is very different from that of an individual. I know how difficult a thing it might be for Government, even if they concur in my views, to carry them into effect; and I am fully aware of all the inconvenience which would arise from their at all hinting at that concurrence, unless they were prepared to act upon it. All I can say is, that ours is a choice of difficulties, and that the course which I have suggested would, I sincerely believe, be most beneficial to the country. If these views are not entertained by others in this House, or sanctioned by public opinion out of doors, it would be vain to expect that they should lead, at present, to any practical result. But if, at any future day, a sense of the public interest should induce his Majesty's Government to act upon them, I shall be prepared to give my most cordial assistance and support, towards overcoming the various difficulties, which I am fully sensible must arise in carrying those views into effect, and towards conciliating the feelings of all who might continue adverse to their adoption.

In the course of this debate, allusion has frequently been made to possible improvements in the Banking System, as one means of affording some relief to the country; and I understood my right honourable friend, the President of the Board of Trade, to say, that he expected much benefit from a revision of the system of Country banks, and from giving publicity to their proceedings. I am friendly to publicity. But if it be required from banking establishments in the country, I trust that the same rule will be applied to the Bank of the State—the Bank of England. Had that system of publicity, of which my right honourable friend is the advocate, prevailed between 1824 and 1826, it would, in my opinion, have guarded us from the risk of such a calamity as that which was upon the point

of taking place, at a period of profound peace, towards the close of the year 1825.

Far be it from me, in making this observation, to cast any reflection upon the Directors of the Bank of England. I know that they are zealous and disinterested in the management of the great trust reposed in them. But it is their duty, in that management, to look to the interests of the body of proprietors whom they represent. It is the duty of this House, on the other hand, if they think fit to grant a monopoly, to surround and fence it with such regulations, as may prevent the public interests from being prejudiced, by being placed in collision with the interests of those, upon whom the monopoly is conferred.

The first of all our cares, in revising the Banking system of the country, must be to satisfy ourselves that nothing is omitted, in the way of precaution, which may tend to secure the public against a possible recurrence of that greatest of all calamities, another suspension of cash payments. I cannot pass over even this opportunity of repeating my doubts, whether the affairs of the Bank are conducted with a sufficient regard to this paramount object. With their original capital all locked up upon loan to Government, they have, at the same time, nearly the whole of their outstanding credit resting upon securities, equally unavailable. The sound system of banking, on the contrary, would appear to require, that the amount of their issues should be more immediately within their command, as the only certain protection,—for themselves, against those emergencies that will occur, even in time of peace,—for the public, against a recurrence of the dreadful effects of such a panic as that of 1825.

There is no saying how soon, should trade revive with more than its usual activity, we may again witness another season of excitement, and extravagant speculation. Should an unfavourable state of the foreign exchanges be the con-

sequence, their turning against us would, for a time, rather encourage than repress that spirit of speculation. The salutary check, under such a contingency, can only be applied by the prudence of the Bank of England. But how is that check to be called into action, without the risk of panic, if both the capital and credit of the Bank are locked up in dead weight, in exchequer bills, in mortgages upon land, in an advance to the rebuilding of London Bridge?—all of them, I admit, assets most perfectly solid and secure, but all of that inconvertible description, upon which no banking establishment, I think, having the whole of its outstanding engagements payable upon demand, ought to rest so large a portion of its liabilities. This, however, is a fit subject for a separate investigation, and into which, therefore, I will not go more at large on the present occasion.

I have detained the House, I am aware, longer than any member, having no official duties to discharge, can be justified in claiming their attention. My apology must be, in part, that I have had to defend measures, for which I am more immediately responsible, as having brought them forward when I was in office; and, partly, that I have thought this a fit occasion for stating the views which I entertain of the present condition of the country. I cordially thank the House for the indulgence with which they have heard me upon these important topics.

After all—do what we will, say what we may—the immense sacrifices and unparalleled exertions of the last long war must tell, in abridging the comforts, and adding to the difficulties, of the present generation. Fifteen years have now elapsed since that war was brought to a glorious termination. From its commencement I have been more or less in public life. In the course of it, there is scarcely a conceivable trial of fortitude to which the country, and those who administered its affairs, were not exposed.

Mutiny in our fleets,—civil war in Ireland,—the stoppage of the Bank,—defection of our allies,—the overthrow and subjugation of all the great powers of Europe by the enemy to which we were opposed,—our commerce placed under an interdict in every part of the civilized world,—these are some of the evils of which, having witnessed the first overwhelming shock, I shall retain through life a vivid recollection. But, amid all the scenes of alarm and despondency, I might almost say despair, occasioned by this succession of calamities, I tax my memory in vain for one single act of weakness or dishonour, of spoliation or bad faith. Never did such expedients suggest themselves to those great and firm minds that then presided over the destinies of the country. If in vain I tax my memory for one act of that description, upon which any man, the most envious of my country's fame, can put his finger and say, "this is a blot in your annals," give me leave to add, that should you, in an evil hour, venture to debase your currency, you will commit an act of fraud at which that finger of scorn will point for ever after, as the hour of your shame and humiliation; and that the period will not then be distant, in which you will deeply repent, but repent too late, the irretrievable consequences of so ruinous a proceeding.

For myself, I once more enter my protest against such an infringement of the national faith. I cannot vote either in support of the original motion, or of the amendment. Taken abstractedly, they both embrace too wide a field for any useful enquiry. But my greater objection is, that I cannot separate the wish for enquiry, from the grounds upon which that wish stands recommended to the House, by almost every member who has supported it. Again, to the form of the enquiry, as recommended in the original motion, I have an insuperable objection. In the mode recommended by the amendment I might have concurred,

had it been brought forward upon different grounds, and been more limited in its objects. From enquiries of this latter nature I expect much benefit; and his Majesty's Government do not appear to be adverse to them. They have already consented to grant a committee to enquire into the condition of the poor in Ireland. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has given notice of his intention to bring in a Bill to regulate the Dead Weight system; and has said, that he shall have no objection to refer that Bill, together with the whole subject, to a committee up stairs. My honourable friend, the member for Dover, has a notice on the order book, for a select committee to investigate the effect of the present system of our Taxation, upon the productive classes of the country. Whether the proposed committee will be granted or not, I cannot tell; but this I know, that whenever my honourable friend shall bring forward his motion, he shall have my warmest support. We have already a committee sitting to enquire into the affairs of the East-India Company, and into their monopoly of the trade with China. In like manner, I hope we shall have a committee to enquire into the Banking System of the country, in connection with the renewal of the charter of the Bank of England. It is by enquiries thus limited to specific objects, that we shall arrive at more satisfactory results, than by going into a committee, purporting to be for an enquiry into the causes of distress generally,—a species of enquiry which, in my judgment, could not possibly lead to any good, but which, in the expectation of its promoters, might lead to what I consider the greatest possible evil,—the unsettling and disturbing the present monetary system of the country.

MR. POULETT THOMSON'S MOTION FOR A REVISION OF THE SYSTEM OF TAXATION.

March 25.

Mr. Poulett Thomson moved for a Select Committee, to enquire into the expediency of making a Revision of the present System of Taxation. The motion was supported by Mr. Bankes, Mr. Robinson, Mr. Maberly, Mr. Baring, Mr. E. J. Denison, Mr. Warburton, Sir Henry Parnell, and Lord Althorp; and opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, General Gascoyne, Mr. Herries, Mr. Bright, and Mr. Secretary Peel.

Mr. HUSKISSON said, that the only part of the speech of the honourable member for Dover from which he entirely dissented, was the proposal of a vote of credit, or, if he understood him correctly, a succession of votes of credit. He agreed with the right honourable the President of the Board of Trade, that when a first step in this way was taken, no one knew where it would stop. He owned he could not agree with his right honourable friend, the Home Secretary, that if the House supported this motion on any view of a subject which was not consistent with the view of the right honourable gentleman, it would be placing the Government in such a situation, that it would be more manly and consistent to declare that the House placed no confidence in his Majesty's ministers.

With respect to referring questions of taxation to a committee,—without going so far back as the administration of Sir Robert Walpole, examples might be found in favour of the practice in recent times. The Salt duty had been referred to a committee, who were expressly instructed to inquire into the best mode of commuting it. Two different committees had reported on the propriety of taking off the tax on Leather. And yet, in these cases, there had been no alarm in the public mind,—no change of government,—

and no loss of confidence in his Majesty's ministers. If the House of Commons could not refer such subjects to a committee, without endangering the safety of the country, it had better give up inquisition altogether. What were the committees on foreign trade, and what the committee which recommended the taking off the prohibition from the silk manufacture? It had been the same with bullion, the currency, the one-pound notes in 1826;—they were all measures which were first of all investigated by committees of the House. Even the great question of the corn laws had been referred to a committee, and the principal point for the consideration of that Committee, was no less than whether there should be an entire prohibition of foreign corn, or a tax upon the importation of it. Those who were so sanguine as to anticipate the possibility of reducing any of our present taxes, without substituting new ones, would naturally first direct their inquiries to the bearings of the present system; and this could be most effectually accomplished by the appointment of a select committee.

The honourable member for Dover had not touched upon the malt tax; yet it was not a subject to be overlooked, particularly when they bore in mind, that the excise regulations added at least fifty per cent. in restraint and annoyance, to the hard-working industry of the country, beyond what they were the means of bringing in to the revenue. It had been said, that this was the province of Government, not of a Committee; but he asked in return, why they had selected the leather-tax for repeal? Was it not because the disproportionate relation of loss to the people with gain to the revenue had been already pointed out

The honourable member for Bridport had alluded to the mode of taxing foreign Timber, and he fully concurred in all that he had said as to its impolicy. We certainly increased the employment of our shipping; but it could not

be maintained, that we promoted the general interests of the country. He did not look forward to the repeal of a single tax which had been pointed out; but he was anxious to examine into the proportion between the actual burden imposed upon the people, and the amount of taxation received into the Exchequer. There was no intention of taking the Budget out of the hands of Government; but this good would at all events result from the motion,—the opinions of independent members, as to the practicability of particular reductions, would go forth to the public, and be at length forced on the adoption of Ministers, if upon examination they should be esteemed expedient.

With regard to his own imputed squeamishness about the Property-tax, he should merely say, that it had been his object only to point out how far the mode of levying such a tax in these times, ought to differ from that introduced at the period of the war. He had merely expressed a doubt, whether the country would ever right itself, without receiving some greater relief than could possibly be administered by a direct repeal of taxation. The mode of levying the revenue was a subject fraught with interest to all who desired to see economy practised in the management of the state, and he could see nothing irregular in proposing such an inquiry,—more especially at a time when a general impression was entertained throughout every part of the kingdom, that the agricultural and manufacturing interests could not exist under the pressure of the existing direct taxation upon industry.

Another great source of the pressure of the public burthens was to be traced to prohibitions and restraints on commerce, which equally demanded an attentive consideration. For if relief were granted to the operative industry of the country —to the millions of consumers—the landed interest, he felt assured, would at once experience the good effects of the benefit which would accrue from it. In Birmingham alone,

it was ascertained that the consumption of meat had diminished by one-third. The honourable member for Callington had alluded to the case of France; but the French territory, it ought to be borne in mind, was not nearly so extended as it was during the revolutionary war,—a war actually occasioned by the heavy taxes which oppressed and weighed down the people at that time. France in those days, could not raise a revenue of four hundred and sixty millions of francs; and he had no hesitation in saying, that a deficiency of sixty millions had been the immediate cause of that revolution. But what was her condition at present? Why, she was able to pay a thousand millions. It was, he said, his unalterable conviction, that we could not uphold the Corn Laws now in existence, together with the present taxation, and at the same time increase national prosperity, and preserve public contentment. That those laws might be repealed without affecting the landed interest, whilst, at the same time, the distress of the people might be relieved, he never had any doubt whatever. A general feeling prevailed, that some change must be effected and that speedily; nor were there any individuals more thoroughly persuaded of it than those who moved in the humbler walks of life. Whether a committee of inquiry were appointed or not, he was glad that this motion had been made, as the discussion would, no doubt, attract that attention which the luminous speech of the honourable member for Dover, apart from the considerations suggested by the subject itself, so richly deserved.

The House divided. For the motion, 78, of whom Mr. Huskisson was one. Against it 167.

MR. CHARLES GRANT'S MOTION RESPECTING THE AFFAIR OFF TERCEIRA.

April 28.

This day, Mr. Charles Grant called the attention of the House to the Affair off Terceira, and moved the following Resolutions:—

1. "That, prior to the 12th December 1828, her Majesty, the Queen Donna Maria II. had been recognized by his Majesty, and the other great powers of Europe, to be legitimate Queen of Portugal; and that, at the period abovenamed, the said Queen was residing in this country, and had been received by his Majesty with the accustomed honours of her royal rank.

2. "That, on the said 12th December, the island of Terceira, part of the dominions of the Queen of Portugal, was governed by authorities, civil and military, in allegiance to her Majesty.

3. "That, on the said 12th December, instructions were given by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, stating, that 'a consi-'derable number of Portuguese soldiers, and other foreigners, are 'about to sail in transports from Plymouth or Falmouth, and it is 'supposed they intend making an attack on Terceira, or other of the 'Western Isles; and his Majesty having been pleased to command 'that a naval force should be immediately despatched to interrupt any 'such attempt, you are hereby required and directed to take the ship 'and sloop named in the margin, under your command, and to pro-'ceed, with all possible expedition, to Terceira; and, having ascer-'tained that you have succeeded in reaching that island before the 'transports above alluded to, you will remain, yourself at Angra or 'Praia, or cruising close to the island in the most advisable position 'for interrupting any vessels arriving off it; and you will detach 'the other ships as you shall deem best for preventing the aforesaid 'force from reaching any of the other islands.'

4. "That, on the arrival of the naval force sent to Terceira, in pursuance of these instructions, the commanding officer found that island in possession of, and governed by, the authorities above-mentioned.

5. "That, in the beginning of January 1829, a number of Portuguese, subjects or soldiers of her said Majesty, voluntarily left this country, with a view of repairing to the said island, and that their departure and destination were known to his Majesty's Government; that they

appear to have embarked and sailed in unarmed merchant ships, to have been unaccompanied by any naval force, and themselves without any arms or ammunition of war.

6. " That these unarmed merchant ships and passengers were prevented by his Majesty's naval forces, sent for the purpose, from entering the harbour of Porto Praia; and that after they had been fired into, and blood had been spilled, they were compelled, under the threat of further use of force, again to proceed to sea, and warned, ' to quit the neighbourhood of Terceira, and the rest of the Azores, but that they might proceed wherever else they might think proper.'

7. " That the use of force in intercepting these unarmed vessels, and preventing them anchoring, and landing their passengers in the harbour of Porto Praia, was a violation of the sovereignty of the state to which the island of Terceira belonged; and that the further interference ' to compel these merchant ships or transports to quit ' the neighbourhood of the Azores,' was an assumption of jurisdiction upon the high seas, neither justified by the necessity of the case, nor sanctioned by the general law of nations."

On the first Resolution being put, it was opposed by Lord Francis Leveson Gower, who moved the previous question. The original motion was supported by Dr. Phillimore, Lord Sandon, Sir James Mackintosh, Mr. Wood, Sir Francis Burdett, and Mr. Stanley; the previous question by Mr. Batley, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Horace Twiss, the Solicitor-General, Mr. Croker, and Mr. Secretary Peel.

Mr. Huskisson said:—Sir, I am principally induced to address the House, at this late hour, by what has fallen from my right honourable friend, the Secretary for the Home Department, in reference to my late lamented friend, Mr. Canning. My right honourable friend admits, that our conduct has been a departure from the principles of the law of nations; and therefore that it was not to be justified, unless dictated by necessity. I should almost be led to infer, by the tenor of his argument, that my right honourable friend meant to settle the whole question, by showing, that the conduct of the Marquis Barbacena had made our proceedings against the refugees unavoidable. But what did the Marquis Barbacena call upon the Government to

do? To commit, it would be answered, a breach of neutrality against the existing Government of Portugal; and was that, I must ask in return, a justification for actually committing a breach of neutrality against the opposite party? I think not. On the contrary, the condemnation pronounced by the Ministers, on the acts required to be done, is a condemnation of the act performed.

My right honourable friend has said, that the parties contrived to evade the municipal laws of this country, and violated its neutrality by proceeding to Terceira. But, having evaded our laws, we had no right to punish them: we might have had some authority over them, as long as they were within our jurisdiction; but the very complaint made against them proved that they had escaped beyond the limits which the laws of nations recognized as the limits of our power.

My right honourable friend has referred to an opinion of Mr. Canning on the memorable debate on the Alien Bill; and it is principally with a view to correct my right honourable friend upon this point, that I now rise. I must remind him, that the object of that Bill was, to give the Government of this country a municipal power within its recognized limits, which it could not otherwise exercise. Mr. Canning did at that time allude to the machinations of individuals to disturb the peace of Spain; but to make that case strictly analagous to the present, it must be shown, that the individuals of whom Mr. Canning complained, had evaded our laws; and that we pursued and arrested them in a place not under our jurisdiction, and punished them for the evasion.

These circumstances, however, were wanting in the case alluded to by Mr. Canning, and he took care, by warning the parties concerned, to prevent a breach of neutrality, while his Majesty's present Ministers permitted, according to their statements, a breach of our neutrality towards one

party, and afterwards to remedy that, they themselves committed a still more flagrant breach towards the other party. It being admitted, that the waters of Terceira were the dominions of an independent sovereign, it is necessary to show that we were justified in violating his sovereignty, and committing an act of hostility within his territory. What is the justification of that? Why, nothing more than this—"If you do not," says my right honourable friend, "punish these infractions of your law, in ten years your country will become the resort of all the machinators of Europe, and you will have reason to repent of your forbearance." The difference of opinion between myself and my right honourable friend is, that, in my opinion, we ought to prevent these infractions rigidly, to maintain our neutrality within our dominion, which would effectually guard against what my right honourable friend apprehends—while my right honourable friend consented to the breach being made within our dominions, and only sent to punish those who committed it, after they had gone from under our sway.

It might be supposed, from my right honourable friend's remarks, that during the fifteen years we have been at peace, our neutrality had never before been violated. Has my right honourable friend, then, forgotten the repeated complaints made by Turkey,—and has he forgotten, that to those complaints we constantly replied—"We will preserve our neutrality within our dominions; but we will go no further?" Turkey did not understand our explanation, and thought we might summarily dispose of Lord Cochrane, and those other subjects of his Majesty, who were assisting the Greeks. To its remonstrances Mr. Canning replied—and my right honourable friend being then a colleague of Mr. Canning, must be considered as a party to his opinions—"Arms may leave this country as matter of merchandize, and however strong the general incon-

venience, the law cannot interfere to stop them. It is only when the elements of armaments are combined, that they come within the purview of the law; and if that combination does not take place until they have left this country, we have no right to interfere with them." Those were the words of Mr. Canning; who extended the doctrine to steam-vessels and yachts, that might afterwards be converted into vessels of war, and they appeared quite consistent with the acknowledged law of nations.

When my right honourable friend places so much reliance on the authority of Mr. Canning, I can only account for his having overlooked this remarkable passage, by his perceiving, that it contains within it a complete contradiction of the doctrine laid down by my right honourable friend. My right honourable friend makes it part of his case, that the elements of armament were not combined when the refugees left our shores for Terceira, and that therefore, according to the opinion of Mr. Canning, the Government had no right to interfere with them. Up to the time when the Portuguese refugees were required to disperse, he considered that the conduct of this Government towards them was correct. But it has been laid down by all writers, that if any state imposes conditions on foreigners, with regard to their residence within that state, with which they do not choose to comply, they shall be at liberty to retire from it. We undoubtedly had a right to prescribe to the Portuguese the conditions on which they might remain here; but they had an equal right to withdraw if they did not like those conditions, and we were bound to allow them to go freely away. Perhaps it would have been a breach of neutrality had they gone away armed from this country, combining within themselves the means of making an hostile attack; but they had not even side-arms, and no means of defence. Being, then, thus unprovided with arms, their departure was not a breach of neutrality.

My honourable friend, the Under-Secretary of State, has laid it down as a principle, that it makes no difference whether these refugees intended to go peaceably to a part of their own country, or for the purpose of making an attack on some other; but this is a principle much too broad for my right honourable friend, the Home Secretary, to adopt. What, I would ask, would be the consequence of such a doctrine? All the Portuguese must be adherents either of Don Miguel or of Donna Maria; and this new doctrine of neutrality, prohibiting them from leaving this country, even unarmed, whether they were going to unite themselves to the sovereign *de facto*, or to the sovereign *de jure*, would prevent them from getting home at all.

Is it, Sir, for evading such absurd laws as these, that we are to enter into the career of policy which, with alarm, I have this night heard for the first time proclaimed? I will tell my right honourable friend, that if he should act upon these doctrines, and pursue such a policy, he will not be able to keep this country for ten months, much less for ten years, out of war. Why! Sir, at the very moment I am speaking, arms and clothing are about to be sent out of this country to belligerents. Are those arms to be stopped, or are they to be followed and brought back? I believe the answer will be, No. And if it were Yes, of what use, I would ask, would be our skill in building ships, in manufacturing arms, and in preparing other instruments of war, if equally to sell them to all belligerents were considered a breach of neutrality? Should France, in the prosecution of her war with Algiers, send to this country for transports, and rockets, and other articles of resistance, I do not believe that the Government would feel itself under the necessity of detaining the vessels intended to carry out such supplies, though this we might do,—much less that the Government would think of sending a squadron to Algiers, to prevent the junction of these vessels

understand. Not long since, one of these vessels arrived from Vera Cruz, at one of our colonies, with thirteen tons of silver, or about 120,000*l*. On this the commander received at the rate of two per cent. for taking charge of that treasure during thirteen days. The carriers, it appeared, were likely to make much larger profits than the merchants, who were obliged to run all the risk of bringing this silver into the country.

Now, he contended, that these packets were not better manned, or better found, in any respect, than the packets were formerly, before they were taken from the Post-office and placed under the jurisdiction of the Admiralty; and at that time only one per cent. was charged. But that was not all. According to the order in council, if one of those vessels carried bullion from Colombia to any of the neighbouring islands,—a sail of not perhaps more than thirty or forty hours,—a charge was made of one and a half per cent.; and, therefore, when it arrived in this country, the charge was between three and four per cent. He contended, that if one per cent. only was paid by the public, no more ought to be exacted from the merchant. That certainly would be a very ample remuneration for lieutenants commanding on those stations; but it was preposterous that fifty or sixty pounds a day should be given to those individuals for taking charge of this treasure.

He did think that that House ought to interpose, as far as its power permitted, to do away with this system. The situation of the country, and of the different states of the world, was such, that we ought to give every possible facility to trade, and remove, to the utmost of our ability, all the impediments which stood in the way of commerce; otherwise we should lose those openings for the disposal of our manufactures, which it was so important that we should turn to our advantage. He hoped that his right honourable friend would take the subject into his consideration, and

that, in future, the same rate of freight which was now paid by the public for the transmission of treasure would be charged to private individuals, who imported the precious metals into this country. There was nothing of greater importance in our connection with South America, than the lowering, as far as possible, the duty on that article which formed the chief medium by which our commercial dealings were carried on—he meant the produce of the South American mines. By doing so, they would give increased facilities to a reduction of the value of those materials of which money was made.

The petition, which was from the merchants of London engaged in the trade with the West India islands and South America, was then ordered to lie on the table.

JEWS RELIEF BILL.

May 17.

On the 4th of May, Mr. Huskisson presented a petition from the Bankers, Merchants, and other inhabitants of Liverpool, praying that the Bill brought in by Mr. Robert Grant, for the relief of persons of the Jewish persuasion from all civil disabilities, might pass into a law. On the 17th, the order of the day for the second reading was opposed by General Gascoyne, who moved "that it be read a second time that day six months." After the amendment had been supported by Lord Belgrave, the Earl of Darlington, Mr. Trant, and Mr. George Bankes; and the original motion by Mr. Mildmay, Sir Edward Dering, Sir Robert Wilson, Mr. O'Connell, and Lord John Russell,

Mr. Huskisson said:—Knowing, Sir, the ability and the power of argument possessed by my honourable friend who has introduced this subject to the notice of the House, and believing that his endeavour would be crowned with success, I came down with the intention of giving a silent vote in support of the Bill; and I should not have broken through that resolution, had it not been for what has fallen

with the French fleet. Such a doctrine is so absurd,—it involves a subversion of all national law so alarming,—it would so inevitably lead us into immediate hostilities—that I am astonished to hear it promulgated.

I concur, Sir, with my right honourable friend, the Secretary to the Admiralty, in holding in light estimation the gratitude of Foreign states, and especially if, in using that expression Don Miguel and King Ferdinand were present to my right honourable friend's mind, together with the gratitude which they have shewn for our exertions to restore one to his dominions, and bring the other from his thraldom at Vienna, to place him in an important station, which he might to this hour have filled with distinction, had he not forfeited his honour. But I do not concur with my right honourable friend, if, in using that expression, he meant the good opinion of the people of Europe. To that, Sir, we can never be indifferent; and hitherto it has been our highest boast to have deserved it, from our rigid adherence to the law of nations, and our fixed determination never to depart from that law, for any national convenience or occasional advantage. An adherence to this determination is one of the proudest distinctions of England—the source of much of her moral power—the main cause of her high renown amongst the nations of the earth; and if we depart from that determination—if we act upon the principle of interference beyond our own jurisdiction, now for the first time advocated, we shall for ever forfeit that honourable and enviable fame, and become the most meddling and mischievous people that ever appeared in the world.

Sir, on the present occasion, I am less anxious to obtain a majority, than that the resolutions proposed by my right honourable friend should be placed on the Journals of the House; for after that shall be done, I shall have little apprehension that any proceeding, similar to the one now com-

plained of, will ever again be taken. I shall have no more fear that the doctrine of a jurisdiction upon the high seas, and interference within the territory of an independent nation, will again be revived, than I have that Parliament will again renew the declaration which still stands upon our Journals, that a one pound note and a shilling are equal to a guinea.

The House divided: For Mr. Grant's motion, 78. Against it, 191.

TRANSMISSION OF BULLION FROM SOUTH AMERICA.

May 17.

Mr. Huskisson said, he was about to present a petition of very considerable importance, on which he begged leave to offer a very few words. The subject to which the petition related was important to those merchants who carried on trade with South America and other parts of the world, and who were obliged to import large quantities of Bullion. The petitioners stated the great loss and injury to which the trade was exposed, in consequence of the high rate of freight which was charged by King's ships and Government packets, whenever, for safety, bullion was sent home in these vessels. By an order in council, King's ships and Government packets were allowed to bring home the precious metals, and they were empowered to charge two per cent. upon silver and gold sent to this country from the Mediterranean and South America. The petitioners complained, that this tax of two per cent. took away a very considerable portion of their profits; and they farther observed, that in the event of such ships being employed to carry bullion for the King's service, only one per cent. was charged, although, in each instance, the responsibility was the same. Now, why there should be a double charge on the merchant, as compared with the public, he could not

from my gallant colleague, and from a noble lord, in reference to a petition which I had the honour of presenting, on a former evening, from the town of Liverpool, in favour of this bill. On that occasion, my gallant colleague admitted, that it was both numerously and respectably signed; but he now says, that some of the signatures to it were obtained through the great influence possessed by the Jews in Liverpool; and the noble lord who has adverted to the petition, seems to think, that the Jews can dispose of the feelings of the trading classes of society as they please. Now, Sir, I happen to know something of Liverpool, and I really believe there is scarcely a part of the country in which the Jews possess less influence. They are principally retail traders, and are therefore not likely to possess great influence in that town. The sentiments contained in the petition are the genuine opinion of the individuals who signed it, and they should be taken as the genuine sentiments of the Christians of Liverpool, in favour of the great principle, asserted by the House in the instance of the Catholics and of the Dissenters. My gallant friend has, indeed, confessed, that the Roman Catholics were entitled to some favour, because their religion was an ancient one. But if the Roman Catholics have any claim, on account of the antiquity of their faith, he will not surely consider the Jews less entitled to favour on the same score. And when my gallant friend tells us, that our ancestors were opposed to all innovation, he seems to have forgotten, that they brought about the Reformation, which changed the religion of the country—that they effected a Revolution, which altered the succession to the throne—and that they expelled a King, because he endeavoured to destroy the liberties of the country.

With regard to what has fallen from the noble lord, respecting my opposition to the bill for the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, I am sure that every gentle-

man who heard me upon that occasion will bear me out in the statement, that I did not oppose it from any desire to exclude the Dissenters, but because I was apprehensive that partial concession might be injurious to the success of the great and general measure of Catholic emancipation, which was then about to be brought forward, and has since been happily accomplished.

I am ready to admit, that the present question is not one of paramount importance, or of absolute necessity: but upon principle, the concession ought to be made; and as a uniform supporter of the claims of the Catholics, I cannot refuse my assent to it. The arguments which I have heard this night against the emancipation of the Jews, are precisely the same, *mutatis mutandis*, as those which, for the last thirty years, I have been in the habit of hearing urged against the emancipation of the Catholics. But, while I admit that no such over-ruling necessity is apparent in this case, I maintain that the last blot of this kind ought to be removed from the statute-book. When this measure shall have passed, the great principle of general toleration will be completed, and the Jews in this country will be placed on the same footing as those in France and the Netherlands.

The honourable member for Wexford, who has spoken so well that I hope to hear him often, admitted the propriety of admitting the Jews to all other stations, civil and military; but he would exclude them from seats in Parliament. Now this, Sir, is a sort of liberality which I cannot understand. The honourable member would give them the power of the sword, and the power of instructing youth; but he would make them, by his exclusion, the enemy of that legislature, which it is necessary for the safety of the state that youth should be taught to respect, and soldiers implicitly to obey.

Something has been said as to the manner in which my

honourable friend has framed his measure. And it is true, that it purports to be a relief to the Jews from all their disabilities, and to put them on the same footing with the Protestant Dissenters and the Roman Catholics. But does it follow, that if the House shall go into a committee, it must necessarily adopt all that has been proposed by my honourable friend? For myself, I am prepared to support my honourable friend's views to their full extent. If, however, the House should go into the committee, and a proviso be introduced, not to allow the Jews the privilege of admission into Parliament, however undesirable, and uncalled for, that proviso might, in my opinion, be, yet still I am not one of those who would think that the bill ought not to be persevered in, on account of such an objection. Honourable gentlemen may ask, why should I agree to this? But I would ask them, do they recollect the year 1812, when a bill was brought in to grant the Roman Catholics all that they have since obtained? That bill was read a first and a second time. It went to a committee, and an amendment was then agreed to, to exclude them from sitting in Parliament, and on that amendment having been carried, the bill was, as I thought, very unwisely withdrawn. The better course would have been, for the friends of the measure, to have taken what they could have obtained. If a proviso to the same effect should be now introduced, I should deprecate it, and think it unwise; but, considering this bill as a measure of justice, and of relief to all the parties who are suffering from having their rights withheld, I would still proceed to pass it.

I therefore trust, Sir, that the bill will be allowed to be read a second time. It is most certain, that it has attracted considerable notice; and honourable gentlemen have been told, that they will rue the support they are giving it, when they return to their constituents; but I will, nevertheless, support it, as I did the measure of Catholic emancipation,

without any other consideration than that which guided my decision upon that question. Again, then, I will express a hope that the bill will pass, and form the consummation of that course of liberality, which will immortalize the present Parliament.

The house divided: For the second reading, 165. Against it, 228.

MR. HUSKISSON'S EXPOSITION OF THE STATE OF OUR POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WITH MEXICO.

May 20.

In pursuance of his notice, that he would this day present a Petition from Liverpool, respecting the present state of our political and commercial relations with Mexico,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and said:—

The petition, Sir, which I now rise to present, is one which, in my judgment, connects itself with interests and considerations of the highest importance to this country. I trust that this will afford some apology for me, if I venture upon this occasion to detain the House longer than is usual, or, generally speaking, acceptable, upon the presentation of petitions. The petitioners are that portion of the merchants of Liverpool, who are engaged in dealings and commercial intercourse with the State of Mexico. In substance, their petition is entirely in accordance with the representations which have been made to this House by other great trading and manufacturing communities—Glasgow, Manchester, London, and other places, whose pursuits give them an equal interest in the condition of the New States of America. The petition states that, since Mexico became independent, its trade with this country has increased; that it now forms a very important item of our foreign commerce, and that it is sus-

ceptible, under favourable circumstances, of a still greater increase; that it has, however, unfortunately been exposed to various interruptions, losses, and uncertainties, in consequence of occasional enterprises undertaken against Mexico from Cuba, and that these enterprises have been the cause of considerable disorders in Mexico, and of expense and losses, which fall mainly upon neutral commerce. The petitioners further state that, last summer, an expedition was despatched from Cuba, which entailed great losses upon British subjects, and they add, that they have reason to believe that other expeditions of a similar nature are fitting out. Such are some of the statements contained in the petition.

Of the magnitude and importance of the objects at stake there cannot be two opinions. When we look at the extent and peculiar productions of the Mexican territory—at its actual population—a population now amounting to nearly seven millions, and capable of being greatly increased—a population, not our rivals in shipping or manufactures, but able and willing to afford us the mineral productions of their country, in return for our goods, to the great encouragement of our trading and shipping interests—it will appear to all, that we are deeply interested in the tranquillity, welfare, and prosperity of Mexico. Upon the value of our political connexion with that country—upon the importance of its being able to maintain itself in a state of entire and secure independence—I will not now expatiate, though I shall have occasion to notice this consideration before I sit down. The petitioners pray the House, "to adopt measures to protect their interests, and induce Spain to desist from such expeditions, or else to prevent them, as they can only terminate in disgrace and loss to herself, and injury to other parties connected with Mexico." There are two questions which naturally arise from considering this prayer. First, have we the right, or rather have we

not incurred the obligation, to interfere for the purpose of preventing the attacks of Spain upon the New States,—at least attacks proceeding from Cuba? Secondly, if we have not incurred that peculiar obligation, have we not, nevertheless, a general right, in common with all maritime neutral states, or I might say in common with all civilized nations, to insist upon a suspension of hostilities between Spain and her late colonies on the continent of America—I say, "a suspension of hostilities," because, whilst I shall contend that neutral nations have that right, I fully admit that they cannot carry it further, and that the time and mode of recognition is a question for Spain, and not for them, to determine.

First, in respect to our peculiar obligation to prevent attacks from Cuba, I will state, as I understand them, the facts and circumstances which bear upon this question. Late in the year 1824, or I believe in the beginning of 1825, when this country had recently recognized Colombia and Mexico as independent powers, those States, being belligerents against Spain, thought proper, with a view to prevent attacks upon their own territories, to concert an attack on the island of Cuba. On the part of Mexico, a very considerable body of forces assembled at Campeachy, under the command of General Santa Anna, the same to whom General Barradas surrendered last autumn. Colombia had collected her naval forces at Carthagena, and had brought down some of her best troops for the purpose of aiding in a descent on Cuba. At that time the island thus menaced was weakly garrisoned, and such a feeling prevailed amongst the inhabitants, as rendered it probable that it might separate itself from the mother country, if opportunity and encouragement were afforded. When I recollect that at the period in question the two powers —Mexico and Colombia—possessed great financial and other resources, joined with high credit, it is only reasonable to

conclude that the attempt upon Cuba, if made, would have been successful. But the matter does not rest upon my conjecture or my authority; I shall quote the authority of an individual, whose official station in the Government of the United States gave him the most ample means of information—means, of which, doubtless, he made the best use, as his country was deeply interested in the question. The authority to which I allude is contained in a letter addressed by Mr. Clay, then Secretary of State, to one of the ministers of the United States in Europe, and dated the 10th of May 1825, from which the following is an extract:—"The success of the enterprise is by no means improbable. Their (Colombia and Mexico) proximity to the islands (Cuba and Porto Rico), and their armies being perfectly acclimated, will give to the united efforts of the republics great advantages. And if with these be taken into the estimate, the important and well-known fact, that a large portion of the inhabitants of the island is predisposed to a separation from Spain, and would, therefore, form a powerful auxiliary to the republican arms, their success becomes almost certain."

In a subsequent letter, written in the same year, Mr. Clay says,—"The fall of the castle of Saint Juan de Ulloa, which capitulated on the 18th day of last month, cannot fail to have a powerful effect within that kingdom (Spain). We are informed that when information of it reached the Havannah, it produced great and general sensation; and that the local government immediately dispatched a fast-sailing vessel to Cadiz to communicate the event, and, in its name, to implore the King immediately to terminate the war and acknowledge the new republics, as the only means of preserving Cuba to the monarchy."

I believe, that it would not have been preserved but for the interposition of the United States and his Majesty's Government, which both directed their efforts, though

acting without concert, and upon a view of their own separate interests, to prevent the severing of Cuba from the Crown of Spain. The meditated attack naturally excited uneasiness in this country and in the United States. The position of Cuba induced America to interpose, for the purpose of persuading the New States to abandon the expedition; and Mr. Canning on the part of the British Government, had, I doubt not (although no official record of the fact appears to have been preserved in the records of the Foreign Office), an interview with the Mexican and Colombian ministers on the subject. Mr. Canning is understood to have explained to those individuals the feelings of pain and regret with which England viewed the progress of the expedition; and to have added, that we should not be indifferent to any event that might tend to disturb the tranquillity of Cuba. I have a general recollection that the ministry of this country did thus interpose, and I feel bound to say, that those who advised his Majesty at that period would have been guilty of a great oversight and neglect of duty, if they had not endeavoured to prevent an attempt, which, by making Cuba the theatre of a civil war, a war in which the black population would almost inevitably have taken a part, might not only have endangered the safety of the most valuable colony of Great Britain, but would, in its results, have exposed to great hazard the state of peace now happily existing between all the great maritime powers of the world.

It is probable that Mr. Canning urged as a further motive for forbearance on the part of Mexico and Colombia, that they would thereby place this country in a better situation to mediate and call upon Spain to listen to propositions of amity and conciliation as between her and her late colonies. But, be that as it may, these states were clearly inclined at the time (as their conduct shewed) to receive with the greatest deference the expression of the wishes of

this country. They relied with a reverential confidence on our friendly disposition towards them, and on our sincere desire to consult and promote their happiness. I am sorry to perceive that an impression has since arisen in some quarters, that we now repent ourselves of our former generosity towards these states, and that we are rather ashamed of our new connexions: however, I am convinced that the opinion has no foundation whatever in truth. I am convinced that it is impossible for this country, after all that has occurred, not to entertain the greatest anxiety for the welfare, prosperity, and general tranquillity of the new governments. It was under the influence of such a feeling that his Majesty was advised to recognise those states, and I am sure that the same favourable feeling still exists. But to return from this digression: in consequence of the interposition of England and America, the republics desisted from their enterprise, which they totally abandoned, notwithstanding the expense that had been incurred in preparations, and sent their troops into the interior. Four or five years have elapsed since this interposition on our part, and during that time the ministers of the New States, I am assured, have more than once inquired whether the same principles of interposition continued, in the event of an attack upon Cuba being meditated. They were told that our objections to an attack still continued in full force. During these four or five years what has Spain been doing? She has been employed in recruiting her forces, and adding to her resources: availing herself of the advantage of having her towns garrisoned and her police managed by the troops of a foreign power, she was enabled to unite her forces at Cuba for the purpose of attacking and endeavouring to recover her ancient colonies.

Land forces and a marine having been collected, an expedition proceeded in the month of August last from the Havannah against Mexico. I would ask, was the British

Government apprised of this expedition? And I should like to know whether we made any remonstrance against it? Did Ministers say to Spain—"As we protected Cuba from the republics, we feel bound not to allow Cuba to be made the rendezvous of expeditions intended for the attack of those States? If ministers did not act in this way, at least, they have not fulfilled the obligations of a strict and impartial neutrality; and, if such remonstrances were made, I am sorry to say that they have not been attended to by Spain, which, in this respect, acted differently from the New States of South America. The expedition, which seems to have been projected under the mistaken impression that the inhabitants of the republics would declare in favour of Spain upon the arrival of a Spanish armament, sailed from Cuba and landed without opposition on the continent, where they remained some time before a force could be collected to attack them. During all this time they were not joined by a single Mexican, and the inhabitants did not even supply them with provisions: eventually, they were obliged to lay down their arms.

I have no difficulty in saying, that it must be the wish of every maritime power in Europe, (and of England above all others, as being the greatest maritime and commercial nation in the world,) that Cuba should remain tranquilly and peaceably in the possession of Spain, as I hope it will. It must, therefore, be the wish of all, but more especially of this country, that none of those occurrences out of which maritime contests might arise, should take place; and upon this ground I am justified in saying, that Cuba ought not to be allowed to become the point from which expeditions should proceed to attack Mexico or Colombia.

When, early in the session this subject was brought before the House by my gallant friend opposite,* the right honourable Secretary for the Home Department said, that England would thenceforward observe between the belli-

* Sir Robert Wilson.

gerents the most careful and strict impartiality. If the right honourable gentleman meant by impartiality that, as we were not able to prevent the attacks of Spain upon her ancient colonies from Cuba, we would now remove our interdict, and allow the States of Mexico and Colombia to attack Cuba in their turn, such an impartiality is no better than a mockery. To be impartial, we must place the parties as they stood in 1825, or, if we cannot do that—and there is no question that we cannot—our only mode of proceeding is, to put Cuba under the same interdict as regards warlike expeditions against the New States, as that which we imposed upon them with respect to armaments directed from their shores against Cuba. Although at the present moment it is impossible for the New States to attack Cuba, yet, in the course of the war, if it be continued, the tables may be turned, and perhaps they will be in a situation to do so. If so, in all probability, our impartiality will be again at fault, and we shall feel it necessary to protect Cuba, as we have done before.

Taking the matter in another light,—Spain is a belligerent. As long as she continues so, her possessions—Cuba or any other—are exposed to all the hazards of war; there is no preventing this risk upon any fair principle. Neither is this the only danger to which the continuance of war exposes that most valuable possession of the Spanish monarchy. Recollect what occurred at Cadiz in 1820. Is there no danger in having a large body of Spanish troops collected in the island of Cuba? Is there no danger of feelings of dissatisfaction being created among those who have to support the troops? Is there no danger of consequences at the Havannah similar to those which were the result of a like assemblage at Cadiz, and which might afford a pretence for a foreign force taking possession of Cuba, as the mutiny at Cadiz led to the occupation of Spain by the armies of France? Under such circumstances, the best interests of all parties should induce Spain to put an

end to the warfare altogether, or at least to consent that the island of Cuba should be excepted from its operations. Let it continue exempt from attack; but then it must not be made the means of aggression. If this principle be once established and acted on, we shall have made great progress towards the termination of hostilities.

But I do not stop here. I maintain that it is consistent with every principle of the law of nations, that Spain should now be required to put an end to this useless war. This is not only an abstract right recognized by all the great authorities upon international law, but a right, the practical enforcement of which, in the present instance, it becomes the duty, as much as it is the interest, of other States to concert together. Seven years have elapsed since Spain held one foot of soil in the New States; seven years are the ordinary period of what is even considered a long war, but here the combat has been protracted for one-and-twenty. It is now nearly seven years since, in the Minute of an official conference between Mr. Canning and Prince Polignac, we find it recorded, that the contest was utterly hopeless, and that the irreversible course of events had finally decided the separation of Spain from her former colonies When a contest becomes altogether hopeless, and the object of it, however just in its origin, is admitted on all hands to be unattainable, the interests of humanity require it to be terminated; because war in the abstract, and of itself, is too great an evil to admit of its being continued indefinitely, to gratify the spite or animosity of individuals. But if this be a general principle, founded upon the exercise of what writers upon the law of nations would call "an imperfect right," in neutral states, the application of this principle becomes infinitely more imperative, when the essential interests of those neutral states, and eventually, perhaps, the preservation of peace and harmony between themselves, are involved. This is the habitual practice of nations.

What did we do with respect to Greece? Did we not interpose, by the treaty of the 6th of July 1827, when the civil war betwen Turkey and Greece had been carried on only four or five years? Even after so short a period of hostilities, feeling the ill effects of piracy and other interruptions to commerce, the great powers of Europe considered that they had abundant reason to interpose. Have there been no piracies, and those of the most atrocious character, in the Gulf of Mexico? Has no injury been inflicted on British commerce, in consequence of the protracted struggle between Spain and her late colonies? Why, Sir, so far back as in 1822, we were even on the point of issuing letters of reprisal for the injuries done to British commerce. However, a treaty was signed with Spain, guaranteeing remuneration for our losses; and after a lapse of nine or ten years, I believe we have at length obtained about thirty or forty per cent. of their amount. Is any Gentleman prepared to say, that a war involving and compromising such interests is to be permitted to continue, till the States of Mexico and Colombia shall cease to assert their independence, or Spain be disposed to acknowledge it? If such a principle be propounded and recognised, the war may be interminable.

I know that in the State Paper to which I have alluded, Mr. Canning said, he should observe a strict neutrality in the contest. This declaration necessarily assumed that, every legitimate object of the war being at an end, the war itself would not be indefinitely continued. This, in reason and common sense, is the prescriptive term of every war, and at that term the present contest has long since arrived. To argue otherwise, would be to admit, that a war once begun between two belligerents might be interminable, whatever were the evils and dangers with which it threatened third parties.

The wise policy of Spain would be frank and unreserved

recognition;—would be conciliation, and the revival, for the mutual benefit of both parties, of those sentiments of kindred and common origin, which twenty years of warfare may have weakened, but have not eradicated. These, however, are matters for her own consideration. If, from mistaken pride, or from a false sense of dignity, she will not enter into relations of amity with the New States, she is the mistress of her own feelings, and it is our duty to respect those feelings. All that we have a right to require is a truce to the useless evils of war. To grant such a truce can be no disparagement to the crown of Spain. The monarch of the present day would only be acting upon a principle of which the annals of Spain, in the prouder days of her power, furnish the example. In 1609, after a struggle of many years duration with her revolted provinces in the Netherlands—a struggle in which torrents of blood had been shed, and civil war had raged in its fiercest character, Spain consented to a truce for twelve years; though it was not till the year 1648 that she entered into a regular treaty of peace with those provinces, by which she, for the first time, recognised them as an independent sovereign state. Let the present government of Spain grant a truce for twelve years, and I, for one, shall be then satisfied to wait her own leisure for the period of their recognition.

But, Sir, if there are great political interests which should induce us to endeavour to maintain to Spain her present sovereignty and possession of Cuba and Porto Rico, there are other political considerations which make it not less important—if possible, still more important—that Mexico should settle into a state of internal peace and tranquillity, and of entire and secure independence. If the United States have declared that they cannot allow the island of Cuba to belong to any maritime power in Europe, Spain excepted, neither can England, as the first of those maritime powers—I say it fearlessly, because I feel it

strongly—suffer the United States to bring under their dominion a greater portion of the shores of the Gulf of Mexico than that which they now possess. Within the last twenty-seven years they have become masters of all the shores of that gulf from the Point of Florida to the river Sabine, including the mouths of the Mississipi and of other great rivers, the port of New Orleans, and the valuable and secure harbours of Florida; and, within these few days, we hear of their intention of forming a naval station and arsenal at the islands of the Dry Tortugas, a commanding position in the Gulf-stream between Florida and Cuba. With all this extent of coast and islands, we know, further, that designs are entertained, and daily acted upon—I will not say by the present government of the United States, but, notoriously, by the people—to get possession of the fertile and extensive Mexican province of Texas. To borrow an expression of a deceased statesman of that country, "the whole people of America have their eye" upon that province. They look to all the country between the river Sabine and the river Bravo del Norte as a territory that must, ere long, belong to their union. They have also, I believe, that same eye upon some of the western coast of Mexico, possessing valuable ports in the Gulf of California. Should they obtain these districts, the independence of Mexico, I will venture to say, will be no better, or more secure, than that of the Creek Indians, or any other Indian tribe now living within the circle of the present recognised limits of the United States; and the Gulf of Mexico will become as much a part of their waters as the Black Sea was once of the waters of Turkey, or as the channel which separates England from Ireland may be considered as part of the waters of the United Kingdom.

I may be told, Sir, that these are visionary alarms, contemplating schemes of aggrandizement and ambition which never have been, and probably never will be, entertained in

any quarter. At this moment, I willingly admit that there exists a friendly disposition in the government of the United States, and I cannot doubt that his Majesty's Government fully reciprocates that disposition. Upon every account I am glad to see these two powerful States living upon terms of honourable and mutual confidence, each relying upon the peaceful councils of the other. But it is not to be imputed to me that I am undervaluing this good understanding, or that I am guilty of want of respect towards the United States, or even of discretion as an individual Member of Parliament, if, on this occasion, I do not lose sight of those circumstances of a permanent nature which belong to the fixed policy of the United States, and to those motives of action which, however dormant at present, would probably be revived, under contingencies that, in the course of events, may hereafter arise,—contingencies, which the views and passions of the American people would not fail to turn to account for the attainment of a long-cherished and favourite object.

At all periods of our history, the House of Commons has held topics of this nature to be fair grounds of Parliamentary consideration. Jealousy, for instance, of the aggrandizement of the House of Bourbon has always been held an element entitled to enter into every general discussion affecting the balance of power in Europe; and I am sure there is nothing in the general character of democratic republics, or in the past conduct of the United States, from which we can infer, that their aspirations after power and aggrandizement are less steadily kept in view than those of an absolute monarch in Europe. In looking to the future, let us consult the experience of the past. But, in the case of the New World, we have something more than the history of the last thirty years to guide our judgment. The views and sentiments of those who, during that period, have directed or influenced the affairs of the

United States, have been brought before us by the publication of their Correspondence. I am afraid the living statesmen of this country have scarcely had time to make themselves acquainted with those views and sentiments, as they stand disclosed in the Memoirs and Correspondence of a deceased statesman of America, I mean the late Mr. Jefferson, a man who, from the period of their first declaration of independence,—a declaration of which he was the author,—to the close of his life, seems to have possessed the greatest ascendancy in the councils of his country, and whose avowed principles and views appear to become every day more predominant in the public feelings of his countrymen.

In respect to the Gulf of Mexico, and the immense interests, commercial, colonial, and maritime, which are closely connected with the navigation of that Gulf, these Memoirs are full of instruction—I might say of admonitions,—well deserving the most serious attention of the people of this country. I will not trouble the House with any long extracts from them; but I cannot deny myself the opportunity of pointing their attention to a few passages, which show how soon the United States, after they became a separate nation, fixed their eye upon the Gulf of Mexico, and how steadily and successfully they have watched and seized every opportunity to acquire dominion and ascendancy in that part of the world. Within seven years after the time when their independence had been established, and finally recognized in 1783, we find them setting up a claim of positive right to the free navigation of the Mississippi, from its source to the Gulf of Mexico; and it is not a little curious to see what was the opportunity which they took of asserting this right against Spain,—a power which had materially assisted them in obtaining their independence. In the year 1790, it will be recollected that a dispute had arisen between England and Spain respecting Nootka Sound. Whilst these two countries were arming,

and every thing appeared to threaten war between them, the United States thought that they saw, in the embarrassments of Spain, an opening to claim this navigation as of right. Whether such a claim could or could not be sustained by any principle of the law of nations, is a question which I will not now stop to examine. The affirmative was at once boldly assumed by America, and her demand proceeded upon that assumption. The right once so affirmed, what does the House think was the corollary which the government of the United States built upon their assertion of that supposed right? I will give it in the words of Mr. Jefferson himself, not a private individual, but the Secretary of State, conveying the instructions of his government to Mr. Carmichael, then the American Envoy at Madrid: "You know," writes Mr. Jefferson, "that the navigation cannot be practised without a port, where the sea and river vessels may meet, and exchange loads, and where those employed about them may be safe and unmolested. The right to use a thing comprehends a right to the means necessary to its use, and without which it would be useless." I know not what the expounders of the law of nations in the Old World will have to say to this novel and startling doctrine. In this instruction, which is dated the 2d of August 1790, the principle is only laid down in the abstract.

I will now show the House the special application of it to the claim in question, by quoting another letter from Mr. Jefferson to Mr. Short, the American Envoy at Paris, dated only eight days after the former, namely, the 10th of August. It is as follows:—"The idea of ceding the island of New Orleans could not be hazarded to Spain, in the first step; it would be too disagreeable at first view; because this island, with its town, constitutes, at present, their principal settlement in that part of their dominions (Louisiana), containing about ten thousand white inhabitants, of

every age and sex. Reason and events, however, may, by little and little, familiarize them to it. That we have a right to some spot as an *entrepôt* for our commerce, may be at once affirmed. I suppose this idea (the cession of New Orleans) too much even for the Count de Montmorin at first, and that, therefore, you will find it prudent to urge, and get him to recommend to the Spanish Court, only in general terms, a port near the mouth of the river, with a circumjacent territory, sufficient for its support, well defined, and extra-territorial to Spain, leaving the idea to future growth."

Contrary to the expectation of the United States when those instructions were given, Great Britain and Spain settled their differences without an appeal to arms; and, in consequence, these practical applications of the law of nations were no longer pressed by the United States. Soon after, Spain became involved in war with France, and that war terminated in her being compelled to cede Louisiana to the latter power. In 1803, that whole province was sold by France to the United States. By this purchase they acquired not only New Orleans, but a very extensive territory within the Gulf of Mexico. I next go to the year 1806. Mr. Jefferson was then no longer Secretary of State —he had been raised to the more important post of President of the United States. In that character we find him writing to Mr. Monroe, then the American Minister in London, in the following terms:—"We begin to broach the idea, that we consider the whole gulf-stream as of our own waters, in which hostilities and cruising are to be frowned on for the present, and prohibited so soon as either consent or force will permit us." The letter from which this is an extract, is dated the 4th of May 1806.

If the United States "broached this idea" in 1806, they are not likely to have abandoned it in 1819, when, in addition to Louisiana, they procured, by treaty with Spain, the

further important cession of the Floridas. That it is a growing, rather than a waning, principle of their policy, I think we may infer from a later letter, which we find in this Correspondence, not written, indeed, by Mr. Jefferson in any public character, but addressed by him, as a person exercising from his retirement the greatest sway in the councils of the Union, to the President. This letter, dated so lately as the 24th of October 1823, discusses the interests of the United States in respect to Cuba and the Gulf of Mexico, and these are the statements which it avows:—"I candidly confess, that I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States. The controul which, with Florida Point, this island would give us over the Gulf of Mexico, and the countries and isthmus bordering on it, as well as all those whose waters flow into it, would fill up the measure of our political well-being. Yet I am sensible that this can never be obtained, even with her own consent, but by war."

That a war arising out of these pretensions may one day occur is, perhaps, but too probable. The progress which the United States have already made towards the attainment of objects so manifestly within their contemplation, calls upon us not to regard that contingency as one which provident statesmen may safely dismiss from their minds. It is their duty to neglect no measure of justice within their power to prevent it. The rest must be left to Providence. But if there be any one course of policy, on the part of this country, more likely than another to retard that calamity, it is to be found in those measures which are most likely to heal the wounds of Mexico,—to enable her to establish her government upon a firm and solid basis,—to encourage her industry, and to put her in a condition to guard her territory against every attempt, either openly made, or indirectly pursued, to trench upon her power and independence. For this purpose, she must be relieved from the necessity of

maintaining a military force, disproportioned to her resources, by the constant dread of desultory attacks from Cuba. The government and supreme authority of the state must no longer be the sport of an army, licentious because ill paid, wasting the productive capitals of the country, partly from the necessity, but more, perhaps, from the extravagant and demoralizing habits which such elements of revolution never fail to engender. Let Mexico be at her ease in respect to attacks from Spain, and she will soon become a valuable ally of this country, with all her interests bound up and identified with the best interests of Great Britain in the New World. On the other hand, let her remain much longer in her present harassed and exhausting condition, and the poverty of her treasury,—the necessity of making head against those attacks, may throw her into the arms of the United States, and force her to sacrifices which would inevitably bring on a maritime war, unless this country be prepared to abandon her colonial empire, her commercial pretensions, and, with them, her maritime ascendancy in the New World.

Sir, I will not pursue these topics further. I trust I have said enough to point the attention of Parliament and of the country, to their vast importance; and, if so, I am sure that I shall stand justified for the unusual length at which I have detained the House upon the mere presentation of a petition. One part of the subject, however, remains to be noticed, and it is brought to my recollection by the motion of the honourable member for Callington,* which stands for this evening. It is from Mexico that the great supply of the precious metals is derived, and the whole of Europe is now suffering from the obstruction of that supply. The only speedy, certain, and efficacious relief for that suffering, so far as it is produced by a general depression of prices, is to be found in the productiveness of the mines of that country. I have never

* Mr. Attwood.

denied that the pressure which prevails in this country, upon all the active classes of the community, is, in a great degree, to be ascribed to the progressive fall in the money value of all commodities. This fall has occasioned great hardship, and produced considerable discontent in every part of Europe. There is no state, therefore, that has not the greatest interest in the complete restoration of the mining industry of Mexico. But this is not to be hoped for so long as war continues. Where there is so great a common concern, a joint but decided effort ought to be made by all the powers of Europe for the speedy restoration of peace between Spain and her former colonies. Let them, one and all, insist upon the termination of hostilities, useless for every object of legitimate warfare,—calamitous to both the belligerent parties,—and seriously affecting the comfort and happiness of every other civilized community. I have now only to move that the petition be brought up.

STATE OF THE CURRENCY—INQUIRY INTO THE BANKING SYSTEM OF THE COUNTRY.

June 8.

This day, Mr. Attwood called the attention of the House to the state of the Currency, and moved, 1. " That it is expedient to repeal so much of the Act 56 Geo. III. c. 68, as declares gold coins the only legal tender in payment of all sums beyond the amount of forty shillings, and to establish gold and silver coins of the realm, coined in the relative proportion of $15\frac{2}{11}\frac{8}{6}\frac{5}{4}\frac{2}{0}$ lbs. weight of sterling silver to one pound of sterling gold, shall be a legal tender in all money engagements, as directed and ordered by the proclamation of the 4th year of George I." 2. " That it is expedient to repeal so much of the Act of 7 Geo. IV. c. 6, as prohibits the issue or re-issue in England of any promissory note, payable on demand to the bearer thereof, for any sum of money less than the sum of 5*l.*; and also to repeal the Act of 9 Geo. IV. c. 65, entitled, ' An Act to restrain the negociation in England of Promissory Notes and Bills

under a limited sum, issued in Scotland or Ireland.' After Mr. E. Davenport, Mr. Baring, Mr. Horries, Lord Howick, Mr. Ward, Mr. Powlett Thomson, Sir E. Knatchbull, and Mr. Cutlar Fergusson had spoken,

Mr. HUSKISSON said:—I can assure the House, that I shall occupy its time only for a few minutes, as it is not my intention to go into the subject at any length. I am perfectly convinced, that the more frequently the question is brought under discussion, the more clear-sighted will honourable members become, as to the danger arising from an inordinate propensity to voyages of experiment, which too frequently involve the most fearful consequences that befal such a country as that for which we are legislating.

I rise principally for the purpose of stating my impression, that the result of the present, as well as of all former discussions on the subject of the currency, must be a general conviction, that we are now arrived, after all our sufferings, at that state, at which wise men would be anxious to stop, rather than running the risk of placing the whole system once more in jeopardy, by a renewal of unseasonable experiments. I am perfectly satisfied with the answer which my right honourable friend, the Master of the Mint, has given to this branch of the subject; and I trust that this and the Catholic question, will be completly forgotten in the next and all future sessions; although they have been but too often obtruded upon our attention hitherto Both of the resolutions submitted to the House by the honourable member for Callington, I shall feel it my duty to oppose. The first would be productive of bankruptcy and ruin; whilst the second would lay the foundation of future panic and public danger. I trust the House will never repeal the Act of 1826, as such repeal, by allowing an unbounded circulation of small notes, would again occasion universal distress. I, however, agree with the honourable mover, in his estimation of paper

credit, and consider paper circulation, well regulated, as one of the greatest improvements of modern times.

A noble lord has alluded to my intended motion respecting the Banking system; with reference to which, I may take this opportunity of stating, that I propose, before the termination of the present session, to move a resolution to the effect, that the House will institute an inquiry into the whole Banking system of the country, previous to a renewal of the charter of the Bank of England. With regard to the question before the House, I will again repeat, that I fully concur with the Master of the Mint, in thinking, that if the House were to agree to those resolutions to-night, there would be a general panic amongst all classes of the people to-morrow; and that before the lapse of a week, there would probably not be a sovereign remaining in circulation.

The resolutions were negatived without a division.

STATE OF THE COMMERCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN ENGLAND AND PORTUGAL—METHUEN TREATY.

June 15.

This day, Mr. Hyde Villiers called the attention of the House to the state of the Commercial Relations between this country and Portugal, and moved for various papers to substantiate his several statements. He was followed by Mr. Courtenay and Mr. Robinson. After which,

Mr. HUSKISSON said:—

Sir, I shall not detain the House at any great length, after the very able and perspicuous statement made by my honourable friend behind me, respecting our commercial relations with Portugal, since the signing of the Methuen treaty. I observed, upon a former occasion, that all the equivalent we had obtained for the privilege which that

treaty gives to Portugal of introducing its wines at a rate of duty one-third lower than that which we impose upon the wines of France is, that British woollens shall be imported into Portugal, but without any preference over the woollens of other countries. · Before the signature of that treaty, the introduction of foreign woollens into Portugal was totally prohibited, and the equivalent which we obtained for the privilege which we conferred upon the Portuguese wines, was the admission of our woollens.

Now, Sir, there can be no doubt that we might put an end to this treaty. I will not content myself with saying that we *might* put an end to this treaty—I will say, that we *ought;* and that, too, for this reason. The only privilege which we obtained as an equivalent for those which we extended to the Portuguese was, the admission of our woollens into that country. Now, for many years past, the prohibition on the admission of woollens, the production of other countries besides Great Britain and its dependencies, has been removed; and therefore the woollens of Great Britain stood in no favour, so far as the Government of Portugal was concerned, over the woollens of other countries. Thus, the permission, to import the wines of Portugal at a duty, only two-thirds of that imposed on the wines of France, became one for which we received no equivalent consideration in return, and ought to be withdrawn.

I differ, Sir, a little from my honourable friend, as to the policy of the treaty into which we entered with Portugal in the year 1810. I think that if, in the Methuen treaty, this country made an arrangement disadvantageous to British interests, it obtained, by the treaty of 1810, in consequence of its relations with the family of Braganza, then exiled from its European dominions, concessions and privileges highly advantageous to it, and greater, perhaps, than were strictly just towards the other party. By that arrangement the Methuen treaty was continued. We gave to Portugal the privilege of importing

its wines at two-thirds of the duty imposed upon the wines of any other country; and Portugal bound itself to us to receive all articles, the manufacture and produce of Great Britain, at a rate of duty not exceeding fifteen per cent. on their value; whilst the same articles, being the produce of other countries, were to pay a duty of twenty-five per cent. Now, Sir, when we bound ourselves to grant to Portugal an equality of duty upon one article only of its produce, it was scarcely fair to demand from Portugal, that she should receive all articles of our produce and manufacture, at a rate of duty so much less than that which she imposed on the same article when imported from other countries.

I am of opinion, Sir, that in all treaties of commerce, the great object should be to establish a complete reciprocity between the two nations who were parties to them. It never can be productive of advantage to a strong country to impose conditions that are at once unjust and onerous on a weak country; and I am satisfied that, whatever advantages England may have derived from the treaty of 1810, there has been, on the part of Portugal, from a feeling of its inequality, a disposition either to evade its conditions, or to compensate themselves by obtaining other advantages, not consistent either with the letter or with the spirit of that treaty.

I agree with my honourable friend in the condemnation which he has passed upon the wine monopoly of Oporto. The company engaged in that monopoly is a company possessing great power. All the men of consideration, influence, power and wealth in Portugal, are members of it. They have made it a great engine of state, by which they have raised the price of the wines of Portugal, in a very undue manner, and in a very unfair degree. I believe I shall not overstate the amount to which this company has raised the price of Portuguese wines, when I say, it is equal to fifteen pounds on every pipe. It imposes

upon this country, the most favoured of all countries in Portugal, as far as commerce is concerned, this condition—that the Company should have the power of determining the quantity of wine to be sent off to England in any one year.

Nor, Sir,—though certainly bad enough—is this all. It has even the power of selecting each pipe to be sent to England; and when it has done this, it does not stop even there. It takes as much of the wine itself as it thinks proper, and then it leaves the remainder to be purchased by the British trader. And even this is not the end of the abuse. The English trader cannot buy any wine in Portugal, save that which is allotted for him by the Company. He cannot buy the wine which the Swede or the Dane is at liberty to buy; and thus, if the wine of Portugal be, as the honourable member for Worcester has stated, the favourite beverage of this country, we have not the chance of obtaining it in the highest perfection, as we are obliged to put up with any trash which may be chosen for us by the Oporto Company.

On a former occasion, I shewed that all these abuses have grown out of this monopoly. This monopoly has been made the subject of frequent representation to the Government of Portugal; and that government has promised, over and over again, to redress the grievances which have grown out of it. Now, Sir, we have no right to compel any country to change its municipal regulations, for the sake of either pleasing or profiting our merchants; and hence arises the great difficulty of getting any alteration made in this monopoly.

My honourable friend has stated, that since the fifteen years, for which the treaty of 1810 was to continue, expired in 1825, that treaty is now open to revision. It is true, Sir, that that treaty is open to revision; but it is not true that it is at an end. The treaty is perpetual—subject only to the right of being revised by both parties,

if they so think fit, at the expiration of fifteen years. In 1825, that period of fifteen years expired. It had no sooner terminated, than negociations were commenced for the revision of it. I, Sir, had the honour of being at that time, President of the Board of Trade; and these negociations were conducted by the late Mr. Canning and myself, with the Portuguese Ambassador in this country. The treaty was almost satisfactorily arranged, when political events prevented its completion. In this negociation his Majesty's Government never lost sight of the abuses arising out of this monopoly. A provision was made in the project of treaty, and was almost agreed upon, for putting an end to them. I must therefore put in my claim to have one of these alternatives acceded to—Either place the two countries upon a footing of equality, or, if we are to have the exclusive privilege in Portugal of importing our cottons, our woollens, our silks, our hardware, at duties one-third lower than those imposed on the same articles imported from other countries, in common justice allow, not only wine, but all the productions of Portugal, to come into our dominions on the same terms.

I will not, Sir, give any opinion at present, as to which of these two plans I consider best; though, certainly, upon the principles which I have always advocated, I am inclined to think that it would be advisable to act on the principles of reciprocity.

The honourable member for Worcester has stated, that if we give up our present advantages in Portugal, we shall have every reason to fear the competition of France. For my own part, I believe there is no occasion for us to be in any such state of alarm. We shall, I have no doubt, find, that even with the most enterprising spirit of competition, our manufactures will still meet with the same preference in Portugal, as they now meet with in every other country. As to the trade with Newfoundland, on which

the honourable member has laid so much stress, it would be placed on the same footing as the trade in fish of other countries. Though we might not retain all, we should still retain great part of it. I very much doubt whether monopoly does not in all trades lead to expense, indifference, remissness, and negligence, on the part of those who possess it. Only give fair competition to the British fish-curer, and I shall not be afraid of his being able to meet his rivals in the Portuguese markets with complete success.

Be that, however, as it may, this is not the period for us to discuss the question; but it is the province of his Majesty's Government to arrange with Portugal, as soon as the political circumstances of the two countries will permit, the footing on which the trade between them ought to be permanently settled. All that I contend for at present is this,—that we should not exact from Portugal, conditions which we ourselves would not be willing to grant. I state it to be my deliberate opinion, that the trade of Portugal would be most effectually promoted, by its not being placed under the care of Government, as to its details. I admit that our chief trade with Portugal is indeed carried on directly with that country, but indirectly through it with Spain. Every body knows that the fish and the manufactured goods which we send to Lisbon and other places in Portugal find their way thence into Spain, and are there consumed. As to Portugal, it is evident that she is every day becoming more and more a weak and impoverished country; but that is no reason why she should not be treated with all the regard which is due to her as our ancient ally, and with all the moderation which is best calculated to advance our trade and promote our general interests."

The motion was agreed to.

MR. HUSKISSON'S MOTION FOR THE REDUCTION OF THE SUGAR DUTIES.

June 21.

On the 14th of June, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved, in a committee of ways and means, "That there shall be charged the following duties upon Sugar imported into the United Kingdom; that is to say—upon all brown, or Muscovado sugar, being the produce of, and imported from, the British possessions in America, or the island of Mauritius, according to the average price of brown or Muscovado, published in the manner directed by law, *viz.*—If the value of such sugar shall exceed such average price by more than 1*s.* the cwt., 27*s.*: if such sugar shall not exceed in value such average price by more than 1*s.* the cwt., 25*s.* 6*d.*: if such sugar shall be of less value than such average price by 2*s.* the cwt., 24*s.*: if by 4*s.* the cwt., 22*s.*: if by 5*s.* the cwt., 20s.: Upon all brown, Muscovado, or clayed sugar, the produce of, and imported from the British possessions in the East-Indies, the cwt. 37*s.*: upon all other such sugar, the produce of, or imported from, any other places, the cwt. 63*s.*" The resolutions having been read, the discussion upon them was adjourned, at the suggestion of Mr. Huskisson, to this day; when the Chancellor of the Exchequer stated, that he was prepared to allow the East-India Sugars, of a low price, to come into the market on a proportionate reduction of duty; but that the higher description were to remain in the same relative condition as to duty, as they were before the contemplated alterations. Upon which,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and said:—

As I perceive, Sir, that it is not the intention of my right honourable friend to propose any other alteration or modification of these resolutions than the one which he has just announced with respect to East-India sugars, I must crave the indulgence of the Committee, while I offer a few observations on what appears to me to be the most extraordinary, the most incomprehensible, and the least practicable proposition, that was ever submitted to the Parliament of this country. I am glad that the discussion upon it was postponed to this day, since it has given time for consider-

ation; and I believe there has seldom been a proposition which, when duly considered, has created more doubt and alarm, or been calculated to produce more trickery and endless confusion.

The proposition, if I understand it rightly, goes to reduce the duty on sugars, of a certain description and price, from 27*s.* to 20*s.* per cwt.; and my right honourable friend alleged, as the reason for the reduction, the distressed state of the West-India islands. In order to prove this distress, my right honourable friend cited the case of two estates, and explained the extent of the produce and the cost of cultivation. These two estates were, I presume, in the same island, and probably the land of the same individual; but if he had taken the whole of the old islands belonging to Great Britain, as proof of the distress of the West-India interest, I believe the illustration would not have been inapplicable or exaggerated. I believe all the ancient colonies belonging to this country—Jamaica, Barbadoes, Antigua, St. Christopher, Dominica—are in a state of much greater distress than those which have been more recently annexed to our possessions. The land of those islands produces now a much smaller quantity of sugar in comparison, than the colonies which have been taken into cultivation at a later date, and which are not so worn out and exhausted by repeated crops; but, at the same time, by the superior skill employed in their cultivation, and by the judicious application of capital in their management, the sugar that is produced in the old colonies is known, although small in quantity, to be of a very superior quality.

Now, the measure of my right honourable friend is intended to relieve the distressed colonists of the West-Indies; but that distress, from these peculiar circumstances, prevails to an infinitely greater extent in the old colonies than in the new. The resolution therefore, by extending the sale of coarse sugar produced by the new colonies will tend, of

course, to increase and perpetuate the difficulties and distress of the old colonies, where relief is most required. The islands of Barbadoes and Antigua, though two of the most fertile of the old colonies, do not produce more than one-third of the sugar grown in Demerara; and therefore, the proposition which goes to increase the sale of the sugar of the new colony, will diminish, in a proportionate extent, the demand for the limited produce of the old colonies; which, for the reason I have stated, stand most in need of assistance.

But, Sir, this great objection to my right honourable friend's proposition, is not the only one. I would ask him, before I go further, to explain to me the meaning and bearing of his resolution; for notwitstanding that it has been extensively circulated, I know, from the best authority, that there is not a person in the city, whether planter or merchant, buyer, seller, or broker, who thoroughly understands the manner in which it is proposed to bring this plan into operation. Sugar, it is well known, is sold at what is called "the long price;" that is, the price including the duty. Now the result of this measure will be, that whether a man sell his sugar at 54*s.* or at 47*s.*, he will in the end obtain just the same price. If he sell his sugar as worth 54*s.*, it will be considered 7*s.* better, and the duy paid must be the high one; so that as the duty in one case might be only 20*s.* and in the other 27*s.*, the price obtained by the planter may be just the same.

Now, I should like to know how, according to my right honourable friend's proposition, the price and the conservative duty are to be regulated in a sale of this kind; how collusion can be prevented, by which the price will be fixed at a low duty, while the article may be of a finer quality, and the Government thereby defrauded. If sugar be sold as I have stated, how, I repeat, can collusion be prevented between the sugar broker and the purchaser, by which a 54*s.* sugar

may be sold for 47*s.*, in order that the difference of duty may go into their own pockets, with a consequent injury to the revenue.

But supposing, for a moment, that this collusion is impracticable—how, I should like to know, does my right honourable friend intend that the duty shall be levied? Is it to be taken on the general amount of the sugar purchased, or on each portion? Sugar is not sold in small quantities, but generally in lots of fifty or a hundred hogsheads at a time. Is this purchase, then, to be made with no better consideration as to quality and price than fifty or a hundred sheep at Smithfield? Some sugars are worth 30*s.*, some 60*s.* How are the gradations of my right honourable friend's scale to be established, if the whole fifty hogsheads are purchased at 20*s.*? Is a broker to be at liberty to pick out a hogshead, and say, "I like this," and is he to take it at the price of the others? How does my right honourable friend propose to guard against tricks of this kind? Is the valuation to be upon each hogshead of a whole lot?

Again, how are the duties to be paid? Are they to be paid when the purchaser pleases? If that be so, then the purchaser will watch his time, tender his duty when the price is low, keep the sugar till the price advances, and then sell it at a great gain to himself, and a great loss to the revenue. In taking the averages, too, how is my right honourable friend to guard against receiving the lowest duty on the primest sugar? These, and fifty other modes of trick and delusion will be resorted to, for the purpose of evading the duties; by which the object of my right honourable friend will be completely defeated.

I can conceive also many cases in which, from the nature of my right honourable friend's scale, it will be utterly impossible to ascertain at what price the sugar is sold, or what is the duty payable upon it. I will take a particular instance. Suppose my right honourable

friend to be a seller of sugar, and that he has a broker dealing with him for a purchase. Sugars, as I have just observed, are always sold at the long price. Well! the price agreed upon in the case I am putting is 52*s*. The Custom-house officer appears to take his part in the transaction, and the seller, as usual, demands an account of the duty he has to pay. The average price of sugar in the market, I will assume, has been 25*s*. during the week; and at this price the Custom-house officer will demand 27*s*. as the duty on this sugar, as being of a price more than 1*s*. above the average; for if he demands only 25*s*. 6*d*. such will be the case. "No," replies the purchaser, "the price, since you ask 27*s*. duty, is only 25*s*., and the Chancellor of the Exchequer's resolution says, 'If such sugar shall not exceed in value such average price by more than 1*s*. the cwt., the duty shall be 25*s*. 6*d*.' How is it to be ascertained which is right, and which is wrong? Or, supposing that "The Gazette" enables the Custom-house officer to state the amount of duty for one week,—what is to prevent the broker from holding the sugar over till the price is stated to be one shilling less than the average? Or how, in fact, can the sugar-dealers be prevented from having the price most advantageous to their own interests, without considering that of the revenue? In point of fact, it will not be possible to prevent the collusion and fraud to which the complex and confused proposition of my right honourable friend will invite those engaged in the sugar market. If a seller chooses to dispose of his sugars at 25*s*., and the Government officers think they are worth 26*s*., what then, I ask, is to be the result? It would simply be, that the Government would become the sole purchasers, as they alone would not have an interest in lessening the duty.

The next point to which I would call the attention of the committee, is the drawback. Does my right honour-

able friend mean to say, that he will continue to pay a drawback of six or seven shillings a cwt. on all sugars exported? The plan now before us will lower the price of all the higher description of sugars; but it cannot raise the price of the lower; and we shall in future have to pay a drawback, not on a duty of 27*s.*, but on a duty of 20*s.* I protest against this drawback as a bounty to a particular interest, at the expense of the general consumer. But these are not all the objections to be found in the practical details of this measure. I believe, and I am supported in that belief by many of the most experienced merchants, that these 20*s.* sugars will be brought into competition with all the finer descriptions of sugar; and that the coarse-grained sugars of Demerara will, through the process of refining in this country, beat out of the market the fine sugars of the old colonies.

Sir, these and suggestions like these, are diffusing the greatest anxiety and alarm among all those connected with the West-India Islands. Then, there is the question of molasses, made from a description of sugar called "bastards." Is no alteration to take place with respect to it? If there be not, I have no hesitation in saying, that all those who have imported that article, to the extent of some thirty or forty thousand hogsheads, must be utterly ruined by the quantity of inferior sugars which will now glut the market, without any comparative advantage to the revenue.

I now come, Sir, to the calculations of my right honourable friend, connected with this project. He estimates the probable loss to the revenue, if there should be no increased consumption, at 400,000*l.*; but he assumes, that the increased consumption which will ensue from lowering the duty, will compensate for half of that loss. In the first place, unless the drawbacks are altered, he will perhaps lose rather than gain, by the increase of business his

plan may occasion. I believe, therefore, that he miscalculates; and that as the increased consumption can only take place in low-priced sugars, the average rate of duty he will obtain will not be above 20*s.*, and that his loss will be greater than he imagines. He cannot gain any advantage on the low-priced sugars exported, because the drawback will consume the whole. I will just beg of the House to consider the prospect of paying 7*s.* or 8*s.* per cwt. by way of drawback, in order that we may be enabled to export a greater quantity of sugar to Hamburg and the Baltic. And yet this will probably be the result of a system of reduction of duties, the most vicious ever contemplated.

I feel, Sir, as strongly as any man, the distressed state of the West-India colonies; but, feeling that, I would give relief to all, instead of adopting a partial, unsatisfactory, and injurious scale, which, though it professes to relieve, adds to the burthen, and is calculated to injure the revenue of the country, without conferring advantages on any but the foreign consumer. I know that an inquiry has been commenced at the Board of Trade, and that Government intend to take measures for an extended adoption of the system of ad valorem duties. I think that system a good one; but at this late period of the session, there is no time for an enquiry into the best mode of applying those duties.

Under these circumstances, I would press upon my right honourable friend, that which I urged on his consideration this morning; namely, the propriety of adopting for one year a system, plain, practicable, free from objections, and calculated to come into immediate use. What, then, Sir, is my plan? Simply to adopt the system of duties recommended last year by my right honourable friend.* I would propose, that the duty on all sugars, of every description, should be reduced from 27*s.* to 20*s.* the cwt. Such a reduction would give essential relief to all our colonies, the old as well as the new. There would be no difficulty in

* Mr. Charles Grant.

carrying it into execution. It is simple. It would be effectual. It would be a measure of real and extensive relief to a suffering interest; and I am, besides, thoroughly confident, that it would not involve the revenue in such great losses as the complicated, defective, ill-digested, and partially understood plan of my right honourable friend

I recollect that my right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said last year, during the debate on this question, that the reduction of the duty to 20*s.* would occasion a diminution of the revenue to the extent of at least one million, if there was no increase of consumption to compensate for the loss. Now, I will take the benefit of my right honourable friend's argument, when he introduced these resolutions the other evening, and will anticipate, as he did, that the increased consumption consequent on this reduction would amount to just one half the loss; for, as my right honourable friend anticipated an increase of 200,000*l.* in a reduction of 400,000*l.*, I may fairly anticipate that the increased consumption would give 500,000*l.*, if the loss of duty was a million; and I do not think I am over-sanguine in making that calculation.

After the extensive remission of taxes which have been effected in the course of the present session, I certainly am not one of those who can say, that we are in a condition to spare 500,000*l.* of our income; but I would call the attention of the Committee to the propositions which accompany these resolutions, with regard to the spirit duties. My right honourable friend proposes an additional duty of six-pence per gallon on all spirits, British and foreign. Now, this increase of duty, supposing the consumption to be the same as last year, would produce 750,000*l.* My right honourable friend, when he submitted his financial statement for the year to the House, took credit for 300,000*l.* which he expected to be produced by an increased duty of two-pence per gallon on Scotch and

Irish, and one shilling on English spirits. Now, allowing that 300,000*l.* to be deducted from this 750,000*l.*, there would still remain 450,000*l.* as a set-off against the probable loss of half a million, which might be incurred by the reduction of duty which I recommend.

Feeling, however, Sir, as I do upon this subject, I would say, that even if we were to suffer some loss for the first six months, such is the deplorable state of the planters in our West-India colonies—such is the suffering and distress to which many highly respectable families, and the children of affluent parents, have been reduced by the general fall in the prices of all West-India produce—that I think it would be sound policy, on the part of the Parliament of this country, to manifest its sympathy for that long-suffering class of our fellow subjects, by offering, even at some temporary inconvenience to ourselves, all that assistance which, in the present distressed and embarrassed condition of all classes, it is in our power to give them. Much as the West-India planters have been, from time to time, promised, nothing has, as yet, been done for them. Up to this hour, though every class in the country has received some relief, nothing has been done for them. No attempt has been made to relieve their staple commodity from the burthen that oppresses it; although the experience of the reductions made on the duties on coffee, and other articles of the same description, gives us reason to expect, that the effect of such relief would be to increase rather than to diminish that revenue, which is supposed to offer the obstacle.

I am bound to say, while I thus claim for the West-India interest some relief from the Legislature, that, since the duties which I wish to see reduced were first imposed, we have passed laws with regard to their property which, however wise, prudent, politic, and humane they may be, are nevertheless, in a pecuniary point of view, calculated to

produce a very injurious effect on their estates. I mean those laws which apply to them as the owners of slaves. I will take one of these laws, which I think, more than any other, entitles the West-Indians to claim some relief from the Government which imposed it. I allude to the law which prohibits the West-India planter from removing his slaves from one island to another. I am sorry to be thus compelled to discuss, in a British parliament, any question having reference to a right of property in our fellow-beings. But the West-Indians are placed in a very peculiar situation with respect to the estates which they cultivate. They found those estates burthened with slaves, placed under their authority by many acts of the legislature, and they are bound to regulate themselves with regard to them as property, in a manner peculiarly embarrassing.

I have said, they cannot remove them to any other colony, where they may be more useful. I may be told they can sell them, if they do not want so many. But they cannot be disposed of in an island where the land is overstocked; and if they discontinue the cultivation of sugar, because it is unproductive, they still further increase their difficulties; since they do not require one-tenth part of the number of slaves for the cultivation of any other description of produce. I may be told, however, that it is in the power of the planter to emancipate the negroes, if he cannot employ or support them; but there again the law interferes and prevents emancipation, unless the negro can support himself; because he must otherwise become a burden to the community.

This, then, Sir, is the state of the West-India planters under the present law. Employ the negroes they cannot; emancipate them they cannot; support them they cannot; and there are, I know, not one, but several islands at the present moment, in which the whole produce of the land is insufficient for the support and clothing of the negroes who

are necessarily retained on it These are the results of our regulations; of which regulations, be it recollected, I do not complain, and which I do not wish to see altered. But this, I say, is the situation in which you have placed the West-India proprietors. These are the regulations you have imposed on them; and I think they very much strengthen the claims which they have on the Legislature of this country for relief. For these reasons, I earnestly recommend the reductions which I have suggested; and I entreat my right honourable friend to reconsider the terms of his proposition. The relief which my right honourable friend's plan would confer would be but partial; that which my reduction would effect would be felt throughout the colonies as a valuable boon.

There is, besides, another reason for extending relief to the West-India interest, which should weigh with particular force on the mind of my right honourable friend—it is that of expectation, raised only to be disappointed. My right honourable friend, in his financial statement, held out something like a boon to the West-India interest, in proposing an additional duty of a shilling a gallon on all British spirits, while rum was left as it was. This was felt, and acknowledged to be a favour; and it would have given relief, without the slightest prejudice to any other interest. But what will be the situation of the West-Indians—that boon being withdrawn, and an additional duty of sixpence imposed on rum—if the measure of my right honourable friend fails, as it assuredly will do, to give any relief?

Is, Sir, this system of vacillation one which becomes the finance minister of a great empire? If thus my right honourable friend raises one day hopes, only to disappoint them the next, how can he expect that any reliance will be placed in the declarations of Government? In such a state of vacillation and uncertainty, it is our duty to compel him, by the vote of this night, to adopt the measure pro-

posed last session; by which, as I have stated, relief would be conferred on a great interest in distress, benefit given to the consumers of sugar throughout the empire, and no injury done to the revenue. At present, there is a total suspension of the sugar trade at this the most active season of the year, owing to the right honourable gentleman's most injudicious, intricate, and impracticable propositions. Nor is this stagnation, or rather suspension, of trade confined to sugar. It extends to other commodities, and springs from the same causes—the uncertain, vacillating conduct of my right honourable friend.

Sir, I stand here as the representative, I admit, in a general sense, of all the interests in the country; but I am also the immediate representative of the second great commercial community in the empire; and I speak the opinion of a great portion of the extensive interests of that emporium of commerce—of all those closely bound by their interests with the West-India colonies—when I say, that this system of indecision and of experiment has produced there the greatest alarm, has inflicted serious injuries on commerce, and is calculated to unsettle all transactions between man and man. Only look at the spectacle which has been exhibited, by the way in which Government have proceeded with the spirit duties! When the right honourable gentleman proposed to lay an additional duty of one shilling per gallon on British spirits, large orders were, of course, sent out to the West-Indies, to make more rum and less sugar. And, is it nothing to these interests to have declarations, emanating from a Government, taken up, and abandoned, without system, foresight, or consideration?

Look, too, at the course pursued, with regard to other articles! Three months ago it was announced, that the growth of tobacco in this country would be encouraged, under certain regulations. Orders were, of course, sent out to America, to stop the importation of tobacco, in anti-

cipation of this change. Now, however, comes a determination, that tobacco shall not be grown in this country! Is it to be conceived that vacillations of this kind do not produce the most injurious effects on the interests of individuals? I say, Sir, it is the duty of a Government to digest its plans better; and when those plans are so digested, to be more steady in its resolves. It is the duty of ministers to come to Parliament with well-digested plans of action. Their measures should all be so prepared, as to occasion the least possible mischief to the commerce and the existing arrangements of society. Whenever change is rendered necessary, and when measures for effecting that change have been adopted with wisdom and foresight, they should be rigidly adhered to. It is the duty of Parliament, when it finds the Government pursuing this wavering, indecisive course, to compel them to adopt principles of permanent and general legislation. Great interests ought not to be thus trifled with. The consequences are too lasting, and too extensive. Questions of vital importance to the commerce of the country should not be treated as if they were mere temporary expedients, in which what is done one day may be undone the next—as if nothing has happened, or will happen, in consequence of the change, to the prejudice of any class or interest. We cannot, I repeat it, treat such mighty questions thus. My right honourable friend must not imagine that this kind of marching and countermarching policy is one which ought to prevail over the commercial interests of a country like this—as if the Government could put forward laws as they would an advanced guard, with instructions to fall back, or to wheel to the right or to the left, as occasion might require—without any explanation of the why or the wherefore.

I am not, Sir, stating my own feelings, so much as I am the feelings of the people generally who are placed in such

a state of difficulty and alarm by this course, that they know not for a single day how to proceed, because they know not what the next may bring forth. It is not, therefore, in the tone of angry reproach, but of admonition, that I call on my right honourable friend to abandon this course of vacillation, retractation, adaptation, and alteration, which unsettles all the transactions of commerce, and renders the measures of Government suspected and hateful. I confidently predict, that my right honourable friend's present proposition will fail—that it will not be found practicable in its operation; while I am equally confident, that by reducing and equalizing all the duties on sugars to 20*s*., those evils will be avoided, relief afforded to a suffering interest, and additional comforts diffused among the poorer classes of the community.

Mr. Huskisson afterwards moved, "That it is expedient that all brown, Muscovado, and clayed sugar, being the produce of, and imported from, the British possessions in America, or the island of Mauritius, be imported into the United Kingdom at a duty of 20*s*. the cwt." The amendment was supported by Mr. Keith Douglas, Mr. Poulett Thomson, Mr. John Stewart, Mr. Manning, Mr. Bright, and Mr. Hume; and opposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Herries, and Mr. Secretary Peel. The House divided: For the amendment, 144. Against it, 182. Majority against Mr. Huskisson's amendment, 38. On the resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer being put,

Mr. HUSKISSON again rose. He denied the practicability of carrying the proposed plan into execution. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, he said, contended that it was practicable, because henceforth all sugar would be sold at what were called short prices, instead of at long prices. The thing was absolutely impossible; and he would tell the Committee why. At present, there was a fixed duty of 27*s*., which was to be deducted from the long price, in order to ascertain how much the sugar sold above or below the average price. The average price was made up each week,

by deducting 27*s.* from the long price. To make the matter clear, he would suppose that the average price, during the present week, was 25*s.*, which had been arrived at by deducting 27*s.* from the long price of sugar sold in the antecedent week. It was impossible that a knowledge of the average value of sugar could be obtained, except by deducting 27*s.* from the long price. This was so obvious, that he was astonished at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement on the subject.

He thought he could show, to the satisfaction of every man of business, that his right honourable friend did not understand his own proposition. He would once more put a very possible case to his right honourable friend; and if his plan were capable of being put into practice, he could give him an easy answer. He would suppose the average price this week to be 25*s.*, and that a lot of sugar was sold at 52*s.* When the sale was made, the Custom-house officer asked the seller, what he had sold the sugar for? Fifty-two shillings was the reply. The Custom-house officer deducted 27*s.* from the 52*s.*, and found that 25*s.* remained as the average price. The seller told the Custom-house officer, that he could not ask him to pay a duty of 27*s.*, because the resolution of the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared that that duty was not to be paid unless the sugars were sold at one shilling above the average price, whereas, in the present case, the average price was not exceeded at all. That was a poser to the Custom-house officer. He admitted that the statement was correct, and fixed the duty at 25*s.* 6*d.*, which left the seller a net price of 26*s.* 6*d.* on the transaction, so that, in fact, he sold the sugar at 1*s.* 6*d.* above the average. He wished the Chancellor of the Exchequer to state how this difficulty could be avoided. There was not a man in the House—there was not a practical man in the Customs—there was not an ingenious man in the Cabinet—who could give him an answer upon this

point. His right honourable friend called this an ad valorem duty. Now, he denied that it was so. It was no more an ad valorem duty, than the impost affixed to the ascending and descending scale with respect to wheat could be considered an ad valorem duty.

He certainly should vote against the whole of these resolutions; because he looked upon them, in the first place, as impracticable; and because, in the next, if they were attempted to be carried into effect, they were liable to be constantly evaded and defeated. His right honourable friend had recommended the measure as one which would give relief to the West-India interest; but it would do no such thing. It would give relief to the Mauritius, to Demerara, and to Trinidad; but it would give no relief to our old West-India colonies. It would give an advantage to the former, which did not want assistance; and it would not confer any advantage on the latter. The sugars which this scale of duty would allow to come more readily into the market were the sugars of Demerara, and places where it was obtained at a less proportionate cost, than were the finer sugars of our old colonies. At present, he believed, the value of a slave at Barbadoes or at Antigua, was not more than 35*l.* or 40*l.*; while in Demerara, Trinidad, or the Mauritius, it was from 80*l.* to 90*l.* This shewed which colonies were flourishing, and which were in distress.

But the measure would do more than withhold relief from those by whom it was most wanted. It would add to their distress, by bringing in the sugars of those other colonies at a cheaper rate, and thereby check the consumption of those from the older ones. Neither would the measure be of any advantage to the poorer classes of the people of this country. The sugars which they chiefly consumed were the Muscovado sugars from the colonies; while the coarse sugars, on which the duty was to be reduced, were chiefly employed by the refiner, and converted into that sugar

which was exclusively used by the rich. He would assert, from what he had that day learned from his constituents, that if this measure were suffered to pass, the West-India colonies would be reduced to a state of absolute despair and utter ruin, and in common justice we ought to be prepared to take the negroes into our own keeping; for it would be impossible that they could be profitably employed in cultivating sugar.

The right honourable gentleman next proceeded to complain of the various statements made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at different periods; declaring that he greatly disliked his right honourable friend's piece-meal budgets. He had come forward with one statement and one plan in March; and he had another statement and another plan now. He sincerely believed that his right honourable friend had not contemplated any reduction of taxation, until after the House had forced him to do so. At the opening of the session, the noble Duke at the head of the Government had stated in the House of Lords, that the reductions could not extend beyond a million and a half; but, nine days afterwards, his right honourable friend had come down and proposed a repeal of taxes to the amount of three millions. His right honourable friend had stated a week ago, that the revenue he should obtain from his proposed increase of the duty on spirits would be 300,000*l.*; but the quantity of spirits consumed last year was 31,390,000 gallons, and this, at sixpence the gallon additional, would amount to 760,000*l.* This was a set-off, and a very large one too, against any diminution of the duty on sugars. By assenting to his proposition, therefore, there would have been no hazard to the public credit; but instead of doing so, his right honourable friend persisted in his own unintelligible and ill-digested propositions. He contended, that by proceeding as they now proposed to do, ministers were holding out a prospect of relief to the West-India

colonies, which was a mere mockery. The agitation of the subject had thrown the commercial part of the community into a state of great uncertainty and uneasiness. A commercial paper, which he had received from the town which he had the honour to represent, stated, that the rum, the brandy, the whiskey, and the gin trade were all at a stand; the brewers and maltsters all at a stand; the manufacturers of tobacco and snuff were all at a stand; the sugar trade was also at a stand, and there was an end to the production of the sugars called "bastards;" 40,000 hogsheads of which were annually imported into this country.

His right honourable friend would find his plan impracticable. He would be compelled to abandon it, and he had better do so at once. He would tell his right honourable friend, that his sugar bill would never pass. Before it could pass, petitions would be poured in against it from every town of the empire. If gentlemen would give themselves time to consider the proposition, he was sure that the 182 who voted against his amendment would find that they were practically wrong, and that all that the West-Indians were likely to get in this year of promise was an additional duty of sixpence a gallon on rum. He should certainly vote against the resolution, because he thought it was better to do nothing than to throw every thing into a state of confusion and uncertainty. He now gave notice, that on bringing up the report he would renew his proposition to reduce the duty on sugar to 20*s*. When the bill was brought in, he was quite convinced that, such would be the opposition given to it, that it would not be carried through Parliament for two months. He therefore again advised his right honourable friend to abandon it.

The Committee divided: For the Chancellor of the Exchequer's resolution, 161. Against it, 144. Majority, 17. The measure was afterwards abandoned; and Mr. Huskisson declined, therefore, to renew his proposition, on the report being brought up.

COURT OF CHANCERY—SUITS IN EQUITY BILL.

June 24.

On the order of the day for the second reading of the Suits in Equity Bill, Sir Charles Wetherell moved as an Amendment, "That it is the duty of this House, before it gives its sanction to the appointment of a further Judge in the Court of Chancery, to ascertain, by the examination of witnesses, and other inquiries, whether a case of necessity exists for such appointment."

Mr. Huskisson observed, that seeing that his right honourable friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, was the only member not connected with the legal profession, who had hitherto delivered his opinion upon the subject, he felt some hesitation in following his right honourable friend's example. He would, however, venture to offer a few words, as the question must, after all, be ultimately decided by gentlemen as unlearned as himself.

He entirely concurred with his honourable and learned friend, the member for Knaresborough, in the views he had expressed. He did not think that a new judge ought to be appointed, upon the faith of the very doubtful improvements in the practice of the Court of Chancery which had been conceded. There ought to be an inquiry of the most ample description. The great complaint preferred against the court was delay; and they were, accordingly, pressed to come at once to a decision to abate the evil.

Now he would not, like some honourable members, travel two hundred years back, in search of cases. He would simply refer to the course pursued by the House, in a question which was brought before it about fifteen years ago. Great complaints were at that time made, respecting the imperfect communication between this country and Ireland. The Holyhead mails, for various reasons, did not

travel with sufficient speed. An inquiry was instituted, and a report was made, that the exorbitant tolls and fees charged at particular gates and ferries, were named amongst the causes of the impediments. What did the House do upon that occasion? Did they, without making any other alteration, place an additional coach upon the road, by way of remedying the evil? Yet this was pretty much the course recommended upon the present occasion. In a word, he did not think that any case had been made out, in favour of this new appointment. The judges in the court were divided upon it; and the mass of legal authority appeared to be against it.

There was this inference to be drawn from the arrears in the Court of Chancery, and the constant complaint of them, that there must be something defective in its constitution, or in the administration of its jurisdiction. They had had "wings" attached to different measures which had come before them; none of which were, on that account, the more palatable; he might say rather, that the very circumstance of their being so attached to any bill was, in itself, a reason why the House usually looked on it with the greater jealousy and suspicion. The arguments on the subject had drawn the matter in dispute to issue; namely, whether there had been an increase of the arrears of undecided cases in the Court of Chancery? This question, in his mind, they could not be so well qualified to decide upon. He should therefore propose, that the question of the arrears, and, consequently, of the necessity of the appointment of a fourth judge in the Court of Chancery, should be referred to a committee to report thereon to the House.

He begged the House to recollect, that they had been furnished with the opinion of the present Lord Chancellor, that if the arrear were once disposed of, there would be little difficulty in keeping the files of the Court clear for the future, without the aid or intervention of another

Judge. For all these reasons, he should give to the present bill his most decided opposition, until the House should be more fully informed as to the nature of the two bills which were to form the wings, as they had been denominated, of the present measure.

The House divided: For the Amendment, 96. Against it, 133.

ADDRESS TO THE KING ON HIS ACCESSION—DEMISE OF THE CROWN—REGENCY.

June 30.

On the 29th, Sir Robert Peel brought up the following Message from the King:—

"WILLIAM, R.

"The King feels assured, that the House of Commons entertains a just sense of the loss which his Majesty and the country have sustained in the death of the late King, his Majesty's lamented brother; and that the House of Commons sympathizes with his Majesty on this mournful event, which has involved his Majesty in deep affliction. The King has taken into his consideration the advanced period of the session, and the state of the public business, and is unwilling to recommend to the attention of Parliament any new matter, which may admit of postponement, without detriment to the public service.

"His Majesty has also adverted to the provisions of the law, by which, in consequence of the demise of his late Majesty, the duration of the present Parliament must necessarily terminate at an early period; and being of opinion that it will be most conducive to the general convenience, and to the interests of the country, to call a new Parliament with as little delay as may be practicable, his Majesty recommends to the House of Commons to make such temporary provision as may be requisite for the conduct of the public service, in the interval that must elapse between the close of the present session and the opening of a new Parliament."

This day, the House proceeded to take the said Message into consideration, and Sir Robert Peel having moved an Address of Thanks to his Majesty, Lord Althorp alluded to the necessity of providing for a Regency on the contingent event of the demise of the Crown, and moved as an Amendment, that the further discussion on the question

should be adjourned till the following day. After it had been supported by Mr. Brougham, Mr. Wynn, and Lord Milton; and opposed by Sir Charles Wetherell and the Chancellor of the Exchequer,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and said:—

I agree, Sir, with the Chancellor of the Exchequer,—and it is the only point in which I do agree with him,—that it will be better to postpone all discussion respecting the sugar duties, until the subject shall come before the House in a substantive shape. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's original resolutions on the subject are the best that could be devised for the relief of the West-India interest, I must agree that, under the change of circumstances, in the present state of the session, it is wise and prudent to take the simplest and shortest mode, first, of continuing the duties; and secondly, of giving, in whatever degree possible, relief to the West-India interest.

My right honourable friend has asked the House, why we wish to postpone the consideration of the important matters brought before us for twenty-four hours; and he urges that the House has already had the time for consideration, which is called for by the amendment. I confess, Sir, that I was never much more surprised in my life than at hearing that assertion. It was only yesterday that ministers brought down to the House the most gracious message of his Majesty, with the contents and import of which, until the document was put into the hands of the Speaker, none but the immediate servants of the Crown were acquainted. We are there told, that his Majesty is unwilling to recommend the introduction of any new matter, which may admit of postponement, without detriment to the public service.

The question, Sir, which immediately arises upon this large qualification is—whether the matters which are now under discussion are such as can be postponed, without

detriment to the public service? When the Chancellor of the Exchequer says, that we have already had twenty-four hours notice of what ministers intend to bring forward, and what they intend to abandon, let me ask my right honourable friend, whether many honourable gentlemen, after the reading of the Message yesterday, did not go out of the House with the impression, that some description of Regency, adapted to meet the exigencies of the state, would come under discussion, during the sitting of the present Parliament? Many also were of opinion, that some temporary arrangement of the Civil List would be recommended; and such was not only the opinion of intelligent and well-informed members of this House, unconnected with office, but I could also name honourable gentlemen in office, who went away in the entire belief, that the matter of a Regency would be brought under consideration. If the right honourable gentleman were at all acquainted with what is passing out of doors, he would have known, that so much has the point been mooted elsewhere, that it had become the subject of wagers, whether the question of a Regency would or would not be introduced this night. Under these circumstances, I am surprised that the right honourable gentlemen should suppose that the information on this subject was so clear and distinct that no mistake could arise.

Now, Sir, what is the material part of the question? The principal minister of the Crown in this House, in his opening address of this evening, fairly and candidly stated, that he would meet what he apprehended was uppermost in the minds of all, namely, what might be the situation of the Crown, in case of the unfortunate circumstance of the demise of the present Sovereign before the assembling of a new parliament. The right honourable baronet fairly admitted, that the subject was beset with doubts and difficulties—that its consideration had not escaped the anxious

attention of the advisers of the Crown; but he added, that, on the best and most mature deliberation which they had been able to give the subject, they were of opinion that the least evil would be, not to bring the matter forward in the present Parliament. Ministers have taken time to deliberate upon the perplexities and doubts which surround the subject. Why not, then, allow the House four-and-twenty hours for the same object. Called upon to decide on the sudden, it seems to me that there is no room for hesitation. The right honourable baronet has spoken of the expenses to which candidates would be put who were employed in canvassing certain places. I do not undervalue the evils which the right honourable baronet alludes to; but I would have him weigh against them the fearful consequences which might result from that contingency, which I pray to Heaven may be averted, not only as a loyal subject of his Majesty, but as a member of parliament, anxious for the peace, tranquillity, and security of the country, and of the constitution under which we live. Let us remember, that we are dealing with an event in which human foresight will be of no avail—which cannot be measured and fathomed by the wisest—which no prescience can foretell—no prudence can be a shield against. No arm can protect the Sovereign from the inevitable lot of humanity.

What was the wisdom of our ancestors, and what the principle of the law which provides, that the Parliament should continue in existence for six months after the demise of the Sovereign? Why, surely, that they should assemble to see that the succession was properly taken care of, and that the public interests did not suffer. Should that calamity befall us to which my argument applies, and should nothing have been done in the way of precaution, we shall have set the wisdom of our ancestors, which gave us this opportunity, at nought, and the consequences may

be confusion, disasters, and measures subversive of the constitution itself.

Shall we, then, Sir, with our eyes open, and with the means of avoiding those evils within our reach, expose ourselves to the risk—not, indeed, of a disputed or doubtful succession—but to a risk only second to it, that of having the powers of the Crown devolve into hands totally incompetent to discharge the duties of the office. For aught we know, that very incompetency might be the occasion of an act, subversive at once of all the rights, privileges, and prerogatives of the Crown. I do not, of course, mean to say, that such dangers must end in such disasters; but ought we needlessly to expose ourselves to the peril, and would that exposure tend either to the security of the throne, or to the happiness of the people? Again, let me observe, that we are not only called upon to deal with this question, but with others necessarily included in the Address; and yet upon none of these are we to be allowed even twenty-four hours for deliberation.

With respect to the Civil List, my right honourable friend says, that we are not at present to touch it; and I confess that I do not see so strongly as some honourable members, the inconvenience of postponing the permanent arrangement until the meeting of a new parliament. I think that Government ought to have time to discuss and weigh all the details; and when this plan is at length brought forward, it ought to be referred to a select committee, who must have time to consider it. Therefore I do not view with jealousy or alarm, the proposal to continue the present Civil List for a short period, on the understanding that no part of the new arrangement is thereby prejudged.

But what does this address next require us to do? Why, Sir, to determine that all the important measures which

have occupied us so unceasingly during one of the longest and most arduous sessions ever known, should be at once dropped and abandoned. To say the best of it, this is to stultify Parliament in the eyes of the country; for we must declare, that all the measures which, at the opening of the session, came recommended from the Throne, as essential to the well-being of the country, and all the other measures which have occupied so much of our deliberate attention, are to be gratuitously and unnecessarily abandoned. What will the country think of Parliament, and those who directed the measures in question, if we at once break off, doing literally nothing? Do I say, nothing? We have done worse than nothing. Measures have been brought forward, and withdrawn, after they have been discussed and almost brought to maturity; and now the measures which have been proposed in lieu of them are about to be abandoned in like manner. We could not, last night, extract from the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he meant to do with the sugar duties; and yet now, on a Wednesday, which is not usually devoted to business, we are required to decide at once upon one of the most important topics that could engage the attention of the legislature. I do not dwell upon the danger and confusion—which itself is danger—to arise from the fatal and unlooked-for demise of the Crown, when, if the course now suggested be adopted, there will exist no executive authority, except by means of one of those temporary expedients, which I am sorry to say, have, of late, been too much the fashion. An order in council, or a message from the Treasury, directing duties to be levied which are not due in law, and the payment of which the subject is entitled to refuse, might temporarily settle the question of the sugar duties. But what I am now about to refer to goes to the very root and foundation of the monarchy itself; and is that,

Sir, to be settled by an order in council? What I contend for is this—that there are risks which it is, in no way, necessary to incur. Let us settle the Regency now, and not leave it to a period of unforeseen calamity, when all the excitement of party animosities would be in violent operation, and when we should be deprived of the reliance we might be disposed to make on the executive Government.

I cannot too often press upon the House, that all that we ask, in order to avoid the chance of the evils which I have pointed out, is a delay of twenty-four hours. As to the Estimates, is it too much to ask for a delay of twenty-four hours, before we decide whether we shall grant ministers a vote of credit, or whether we shall proceed with the supplies in the regular parliamentary course? That course was settled by the wisdom of our ancestors; and shall we determine, upon the spot, to depart from it, lest some new candidate should unexpectedly get the start of, and thereby derange the interests of, some favoured member? We have still six months before us, for the consideration of these great questions. In that time, or in a portion of it, we might consider the questions which press on our attention. If we do so, we shall stand right with the country. But if we consent to take the course now proposed, heavy indeed will be the responsibility which will rest on members of this House; and fifty-fold heavier, in the event of the calamity occurring to which I have so often alluded, will be the responsibility which will rest upon the heads of ministers, who could advise the Crown to dissolve parliament without making some provision for such a contingency.

On these grounds, Sir, I implore my right honourable friend to reconsider his proposition, and to allow the House the few hours we require for deliberation. I implore him the more earnestly, because we are now in the last day of June, and how shall we be more competent to consider this great question in September than in July? The

attention of Parliament has been not unfrequently called upon to consider matters of importance in the month of July, and even in August; and I can see no possible reason why the advisers of the Crown should recommend the re-assembling of the two Houses at so inconvenient a period of the year as September. That Parliament, if now dissolved, will be re-assembled immediately after the writs are returnable, I have no doubt; but I never can believe, that in a new Parliament, with probably two or three hundred new members, there will be more wisdom, or more capability of doing justice to the great questions connected with the public interest, than in the present House of Commons, with the assistance of all its experience. And then, Sir, Government will crown their grand—I was going to say absurdity, but I will not use any harsh expression—their grand inconsistency of proceeding—If the fatal contingency of the demise of the Crown should take place before the new writs are returnable, ministers will be obliged to re-assemble the old, incompetent, condemned Parliament, to discuss, under circumstances of accumulated difficulties, alarm, and insecurity, those questions connected with all our great constitutional establishments, which might now be calmly and quietly disposed of.

The House divided: For the Address, 193. For the Amendment, 146. Majority against the Amendment, 47.

LABOURERS' WAGES BILL—TRUCK SYSTEM.

July 5.

On the 17th of March, Mr. Littleton called the attention of the House to the Truck System, and concluded an able address with moving for leave to bring in a bill, "to render more effectual the Laws requiring Payment of Wages in Money."

Mr. HUSKISSON complimented his honourable friend, the member for Staffordshire, on the good feeling which per-

vaded every part of his eloquent appeal to the humanity and justice of the House. With his honourable friend, he agreed, that the House ought to legislate on this subject; but he was not entirely prepared to say, that the measure of his honourable friend came fully up to his views. He readily admitted that the Truck system was a great evil, and ought to be abated; but the interference involved other principles and other considerations, which his honourable friend had not, he thought, taken sufficiently into his account.

He would not then argue the question, as his honourable friend, to his regret, had selected a day for introducing the subject, which was generally understood not to be one for the debate of any important subject. He would recommend that some more convenient opportunity should be taken to discuss the measure. It involved the contentment and well-being of a portion of the community every way entitled to the consideration of the House; and he well knew that the suffering of those who already endured a great deal, would be much aggravated, if Parliament were to allow the value of their labour to be measured by any other standard, than the one generally adopted by the community as the measure of value. But he would here stop,—only repeating his hope, that the House would not then be pressed into a discussion of the question.

Mr. Littleton obtained leave to bring in the said Bill; and this day, on the motion for going into a committee upon it,

Mr. Huskisson said, that if, as had been stated, the present system of paying the labourers gave a profit of ten per cent. to the manufacturer, the Parliament not only ought not to put it down by any legislative enactment, but should compel every manufacturer to pay in truck, and not in money wages; but he denied that the system had any such effect. It was, no doubt, of some advantage to the

manufacturer, or he would not resort to it; but it was an advantage obtained at the expense of those whom it should be the especial duty of that House to protect,—he meant, the labouring classes.

In his opinion, all contracts made for money wages should be fulfilled according to the terms in which they were made; but they certainly could not be said to be fulfilled, if the man who had contracted that he should be paid in money, was only paid in goods. The object of his honourable friend's bill was to give effect to contracts made for wages, by compelling the party making them, to pay the full amount in money, and not in goods. He knew the effect which the bill might have on the labourer, and the difficulty which the manufacturer might feel from being obliged to pay wages in money. He knew also, that from a difficulty of this kind, had arisen, in many instances, the system which it was the object of this bill to abolish; but it was, at the same time, impossible to deny the fact, that there had been a rivalry amongst the masters, to see how far they could carry their system of extortion against the workmen.

Now, unquestionably, the best way to put an end to this state of things was to oblige them all to pay their contracts with the workmen in money. Why was money invented at all, but that it should serve as an invariable standard, and a measure of value, in contracts between man and man, and to prevent the inconvenience which must follow from having that standard in articles perishable in their nature, and changeable in their value. The system of paying in goods and not in money, had arisen from the exercise of power on the one side, over the necessity which existed on the other. The workman was obliged to submit, because he could not obtain employment on any other terms. The difficulty of the master was not caused by a want of a sufficient quantity of the circulating medium; but the effect of his being so

paid to the workman had been, to lower his wages twenty, and, in some instances, twenty-five per cent.

A system so mischievous ought not to be suffered to continue. It must inevitably lead to that discontent and dissatisfaction throughout the country, which it should be the business of the legislature to prevent; and if the bill of his honourable friend were not allowed to pass during the present session, it would be productive of much serious inconvenience. Honourable gentlemen talked of the advantages derived to a country, from increasing the quantity of its money transactions; but these honourable members did not appear to consider, that one of the great evils of this truck system, if allowed to be persevered in, would be that money capital would be driven out of the manufacturing districts. Instead of trading upon money capital as heretofore, the masters got credit for provisions; and that was all the capital upon which they traded.

The underselling of other manufacturers, of which an honourable member had spoken as one of the consequences of the present system, was not an underselling by means of the manufacturer's greater capital, skill, and industry;—it was an underselling at the expense of the earnings and comforts of the industrious classes of the community. Of all the measures which had been under the consideration of the House during the present session, this very measure was the one on which more than on any other, would depend the good feeling, the tranquillity, and the improved condition of the immense congregated masses of population employed in the manufacturing districts of the country. He said this, without any reference to the feeling which connected this system with his constituents; for, by the liberality and industry which prevailed among the masters, they were able adequately to reward those whom they employed; so that the truck system, he was happy to say, was unknown in Liverpool. The consequence of this was,

the prevalence of the best feeling between the masters and the men; so that between the two, greater good-will and satisfaction existed, than were, he believed, to be found in any other place in which there was an equal population.

He would not weary the House with the details of the consequences of this system, as they had been described to him by competent judges; but any gentleman who would take the trouble to inform himself as to what was passing in Staffordshire, and in part of the cotton and clothing districts, would find, that a very great portion of the distress now prevailing there, was not so much owing to want of employment, as to the undue and unfair competition to which the truck system gave rise, by making the whole trade a struggle between the avarice of the master, and the necessities and the comforts of the workmen.

Unless Parliament resorted to some measure of value, as the standard whereby to determine the fair remuneration of the workmen, the degradation and extortion arising out of the present system would be inevitably continued. And why should the Legislature not do towards the poor and helpless part of the community, what it had ever been the policy of the law to do towards all those who were unable to protect themselves? It was the duty of every State to enforce the fulfilment of contracts, in the sense in which those contracts were made. There were many instances of the Legislature doing this, as well as instances of its interference for the protection of those who could not protect themselves; or who, perhaps, could protect themselves, but were induced, by the arts of others, to make improvident bargains. What, for instance, was the Act which related to the lending of money upon annuities? That Act was passed, not for the protection of persons who were obliged to sell their labour for whatever they could obtain for it,—not for the protection of the most helpless, the least informed, the most friendless part of society—but for the

protection of those who might, from circumstances, be obliged to have recourse to money-lenders. That Act provided, that every contract should be void, unless the payment, contracted for in money, should be actually paid in money. Why, then, should we not extend the same protection to those who had no friend to guide them, and who looked up to the Legislature as their shield against the extortion of those, who regarded only their own advantage, and never thought of the sufferings and afflictions of those whom they employed.

It was upon these grounds, he was ready to acknowledge, that on the score of humanity and feeling, he gave his support to the Bill, and should do so, even though it were opposed to the doctrines of political economy; with which, however, he contended, it was perfectly consistent. The Bill which had been read a third time, to regulate the sale of arms in Ireland, might be said to be an act trenching upon the liberty of the subject; but the necessity which existed for such a measure, made it the duty of Parliament to pass it. Was there not a like necessity in the present case? And was it not the duty of the Legislature to yield to it? Unquestionably there was; and the House would not manifest a proper sympathy for the working classes of the community, if it did not make every effort to pass this bill.

The House went into the Committee; but no further proceedings were taken upon the Bill.

MR. ROBERT GRANT'S MOTION RESPECTING A REGENCY.

July 6.

Mr. Robert Grant moved, "That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, assuring his Majesty that, deeply affected by the gracious declaration made by his Majesty upon his Accession to the

Throne, of his Majesty's attachment to the Constitution of these realms, we, his Majesty's faithful Commons, should fail in our humble duty to his Majesty, if, amidst our general feelings of gratitude, mingled with our ardent prayers for the prolonged duration of a reign so auspiciously commenced, we omitted to make known to his Majesty the anxiety felt by his Majesty's loyal subjects at the possibility of a misfortune which might deprive them of the blessings of his Majesty's paternal reign, and in its consequences endanger the best interests of the Empire:—That we are induced to lay the expression of this anxiety at the foot of the Throne, from the deep attachment which we feel to his Majesty, and his Majesty's august family; and from the conviction which we entertain, that the safety of the State, and the stability of its Institutions, essentially depend on the unimpaired exercise of the powers vested in the Crown, as the first of the three estates composing the constitution of this limited Monarchy.—That under the impression of these sentiments, we approach his Majesty with the dutiful assurance of our readiness to take into immediate consideration any measure which, in his Majesty's royal solicitude for the happiness of his people, his Majesty might be graciously pleased to recommend, for the purpose of guarding against the possible hazard of those evils which cannot but be apprehended from the demise of the Crown, under the present circumstances of the country." After the motion had been supported by Mr. Macaulay, Mr. Bankes, and Lord Morpeth; and opposed by the Solicitor General, Sir Robert Williams, Lord Darlington, and by Mr. Fleming, who condemned the motion as indecent, disrespectful, and discourteous, and as being dictated by party spirit,

Mr. HUSKISSON rose and said:—*

I am at a loss to know, Sir, in what way the present motion is indecent, disrespectful, or discourteous, or what part of my honourable friend's speech had the appearance of being dictated by party spirit. If it be indecent or discourteous to discuss this subject, has it not, I would ask, already been discussed during the consideration of the message from the Throne, and did not my right honourable friend, the Secretary of State, then say, that the inconveniences which might arise from the demise of the Crown at a moment when there was no Parliament, must be uppermost in the

* From Mr. Huskisson's MS. notes.

mind of every member of Parliament, and of the Government. The House is now in the performance of a duty paramount to every other, and I have heard no plausible reason advanced against the discussion at the present time, except that it is desirable that Parliament should be dissolved as soon as possible.

Sir, the portion of time which, during the last forty-eight hours, I have been able to devote to calm reflection and anxious investigation upon the fearful question and the possible contingencies which are connected with it, which came under our discussion on Wednesday night, have but increased the alarm that I feel at the course which the Ministers of the Crown have recommended to the adoption of his Majesty. I think, therefore, that my honourable and learned friend has done his duty to the House, and will do a great service to the country, by again calling the attention of Parliament to this momentous subject.

First, Sir, as to the course to be pursued in respect to the estimates. They have been lying on the table of this House for five months. We were told in his late Majesty's most gracious speech from the Throne, that they had been framed with the greatest care, and with every possible attention to economy; and yet, Sir, when we are arrived at the very unusual period of the first week of July, we are told, that these estimates, so well considered and economical, are to be thrown aside. And why?—because the administration has not been able to conduct the affairs of the King's Government in this House,—because we are choked up with measures, which they have brought forward, first in one shape and then in another, and none of which they have been able to advance to maturity.

In order to get rid of this confused arrear, and to postpone other matters of importance (for there are several measures of moment, which were promised, but which are

not yet before us), Parliament must forthwith be dissolved. The immediate dissolution, therefore, I must consider as a measure taken for the convenience and relief of the administration—a kind of God-send, by which, at least as they believe, they get rid of all the difficulties of the session. It is not the first time that a Parliament has been dissolved, from a sense of somewhat similar difficulties, and in viewing the dissolution in the abstract, we have no right to call it in question; because it is only the legitimate exercise of one of the most undoubted and necessary privileges of the Crown. Neither will I complain that the ministers have postponed many of the estimates, and that they prefer to ask supplies in September, from a new Parliament, to trying to obtain them from an old one in July. Neither am I much disposed to find fault with the Government for postponing the final and permanent arrangement of the Civil List till the meeting of Parliament; not because I admit that the precedent of 1820 bears them out in such a course, but because, upon the whole, I incline to think that the Civil List may be arranged more satisfactorily to both parties—the Crown and the public—in the new Parliament, than it could be before the dissolution of the old one. I speak this with some knowledge of the details of this subject; but, on general grounds, I also incline to the same opinion. What is wanted is a fair arrangement for both parties, and not a hard bargain, or what might be considered a hard bargain, as against either. Such a bargain, I am sure, would lead to the risk of a re-action, and would not wisely consult either the proper dignity of the Crown, or the public feeling of the country. If, indeed, a Civil List were granted solely for the personal gratification of the King, the smallest sum which could be thought of by the greatest stickler for economy would, I am persuaded, be sufficient for the wants, simple, unexpensive, and unostentatious, I had almost said severe, as

far as his own personal habits are concerned, of the present King. But, Sir, the Civil List is given also upon public grounds,—and in which the public have a common interest with the sovereign—for the maintenance of a proper degree of splendour, consistent, if you will, with the character of a limited, but not unworthy the renown and greatness of an ancient, monarchy—and it is upon these grounds that the Civil List will require to be adjusted.

I cannot, Sir, in looking at the question now before us, and the conduct of ministers in postponing to another session a subject of such vital importance, help contrasting it with their conduct during the last session. In the last session, the table of this House was cleared very early in June; but Parliament was kept together for three weeks after that time, upon a dispute which had arisen in the matter of a private bill, between the coal-owners in the north, and the corporation of the city of London. It is true, that bill was of importance, and I give all due credit to the diligence manifested on the occasion. But when I talk of its importance, it must be taken by comparison, not only with the great public measures now put aside, but by comparison, if any thing can be so compared, with the importance of the measure, which his Majesty's ministers have recommended to his Majesty to omit calling our attention to, in the present Parliament—the calamitous contingency of the possible demise of the Crown, without any provision having been made for the peculiar circumstances under which that demise would then take place.

My honourable and learned friend has well observed, that of all men living the present Ministers, and the members of the present Parliament, should be the first—with such awful duties and responsibility pressing upon them—to set at nought the precariousness and uncertainty of human life, is most astonishing! In one session of the present Par-

liament what solemn warnings did we not receive upon that subject! Look at Lord Liverpool—on the 16th of February, 1827, discharging an important duty in the House of Lords, in the full enjoyment of health and spirits, and vigour of life, the *mens sana en corpore sano*—on the 17th in the morning, stricken to the earth, and lost for ever to his friends, to the Administration of which he was the head, and to the country of which he enjoyed the confidence.

After an interval, during which all public business stood still, it pleased his late Majesty to call to the head of affairs, another friend and contemporary of mine, the pride and ornament of this House and the most highly-gifted orator and statesman of his day. Sir, when in consequence of this choice, the great departments of the Government were relinquished by those who had filled them under the Administration of Lord Liverpool, and when in consequence of that relinquishment of his Majesty's service, the late King was advised by Mr. Canning to call for the professional services of his Royal Brother, in one of the most important and arduous of those departments, and when in obedience to that call, his then royal Highness, the heir presumptive to the Throne, did not hesitate to sacrifice all the ease of his exalted station, and to devote himself with unremitting zeal to the public service, in a most laborious office—how little did it occur to any man—how little, I may ask, with all respect and humility, did it occur to the Lord High Admiral himself—that in a very short period, Mr. Canning, the head of the new Administration, would also be stricken by the hand of death.

Sir, the session closed on the 2nd of July. In the beginning of August, Mr. Canning was still transacting public business;—on the 8th of that month he was numbered with the illustrious dead. This is not the time, nor, if it were, am I, perhaps, the fittest person to esti-

mate what was the loss to his country. I only recall the painful recollection of his premature and lamented death for another purpose. Sir, both Lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning were men of mature, but not of advanced, years—they were both men of temperate habits and habitual good health. Seeing what has since occurred, seeing also what is now taking place, I sincerely pray that this country may not have serious occasion to deplore the loss of both those ministers. I cannot believe of either of them, bold as they were, where energy, promptitude, and decision were necessary—I cannot believe that they would have thought it any thing but extreme rashness (to give it no harsher name), to have parted with the present Parliament, without making some provision to guard against the fearful complication of calamity, which must ensue, in the event of the reigning Sovereign being most unfortunately visited by the common lot of mortality, no provision having been made for a Regency.

Now, Sir, I wish gentlemen, bearing in their recollections the deaths of Lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning, to assume as possible that there should be a demise of the Crown in the sixty days that may follow after the dissolution of the present Parliament. Let us trace a little the consequences, and inextricable confusion, which would ensue. And in contemplating the possibility of such a distressing event, I feel there can be nothing, by implication, discourteous, or disrespectful, towards a British monarch, who has many times braved death on the quarter-deck of an English man-of-war. Any trial to which the Constitution of England, and especially the regal part of it, has been exposed for the last hundred and fifty years, would be no more than dust in the balance, compared with such an event.

Upon the demise of the Crown becoming known, the Privy Council would, I assume, immediately assemble as usual. But when assembled, what would they do? Pro-

claim the new Sovereign! Would they venture to proclaim the heir presumptive, when they could not know whether there was not—(not in *esse*, but in *posse*, as the lawyers term it)—a more direct heir, who, in due time, might become the rightful inheritor, and the immediate ancestor, of a long line of future kings. A proclamation to that effect, under such circumstances, would, I think, be little short of possible treason. Would the Privy Council debate this most delicate question, and how much time would be consumed in such debates? What, in that interval, becomes of the country, and all its concerns? If they issue a proclamation, directing the people to pay their allegiance to A. B. or C., what is the validity of such a proclamation? What is their sanction for such an act? Would it be treason to disregard it? Are these questions to be left to be agitated and settled and disposed of by the people, by the army, perhaps, by bold and bad men; if any such there are—(and opportunity and temptation create them)—in the absence of all regal power and all legitimate government?

The Solicitor-General has referred us to history, in reference to long-gone-by Regencies; but, Sir, if we are to look to history, the most gloomy and dark imagination cannot picture to itself horrors, desolation, and misery greater than those which have been the result of minorities in this country.

Leaving, then, the Privy Council engaged in angry and protracted debate, where is the Parliament?—dispersed, as the members would be at the period of a general election, all over the kingdom. Would it be possible to convene it in less than eight or ten days, if so soon? And then, of whom would it consist? Possibly of some two or three hundred gentlemen, many, if not the most of whom, had been, perhaps, in the mean time, repudiated and rejected by their old constituents—To such a Parliament,

thus unfit to make the necessary arrangements, but nevertheless to be assembled with these new qualifications, with these new titles to confidence, amidst universal agitation, and alarm, and intrigue, and faction, would devolve the delicate task of nominating a Regency, if not of considering of the order of succession. Now, Sir, let us suppose that they have only the Regency to settle—who is to give the royal assent to any bill which may pass the two Houses of Parliament for this purpose? The young Queen? She can only act by responsible advisers. But who is to appoint those advisers, the House of Commons, or the House of Lords, or both? And suppose they should not agree—who is to decide between them? It was assumed by my right honourable friend, that, as a matter of course, the royal infant would act by known, recognized, and responsible advisers. But who, I ask, is to act in the first instance for such royal infant, ad choose for it such responsible advisers? If it be said, that this House is to be consulted, I imagine we should only be consulted so long as we consulted the wishes of the predominating influence; in the same way as corporations are called in, in some boroughs, to choose officers at eleven o'clock, and told at twelve to go about their business, the election having been concluded. There is open to adoption, by those who are now called on to exercise this important duty, only a choice of difficulties; and, considering the great effect which their determination must have on the tranquillity and stability of our institutions, it is highly desirable and expedient, that the regular continuance of the exercise of the office of the Crown should not be suffered to be interrupted, and that its assumption, immediately on the demise of the Sovereign, should be fixed by law, so as to remove from us all the inconvenience and danger likely to result from the royal authority being, for any length of time, in a state of abeyance.

It is not wise, Sir, at any time, to risk experiments of this sort, gratuitously and unnecessarily, upon questions so nearly connected with the Throne and the Royal Family. In the present times, when every thing most venerable and sacred is discussed, and measured, and arranged, with a reference to some calculating, abstract, utilitarian standard, it is most unwise. In England, the people have been properly taught to look to the Throne as the directing and constantly active power, which puts every part of the political machine in motion, and keeps each part in its right place. The Throne calls Parliament together, and prorogues and dissolves it. The Throne states the business for which they have been called together. The Throne is one, and the first, of the three estates of the realm, in the formation of all laws. The army, the navy, the public power of every description, the courts of law, the administration of justice, are all directed and put in motion by the Throne; and the tempering of that administration with mercy is an emanation of it. The Crown cannot stand still. Ever moving within its proper orbit, upon its movement depend the harmony and good order of the whole system. These are the feelings of every man who understands the constitution, in respect to the regal functions, and the character of the monarchical part of our Government. It is most unwise to weaken those feelings, by exhibiting the Crown as a phantom, which can be called into life at one moment, or set aside at another, by the authority of a senatus consultum, or any authority of the two Houses of Parliament. These are very serious, but very delicate, considerations. It is enough to shadow them out, and I will not pursue them further.

I would put it to the common sense of the House, and to each member individually, and particularly to the honourable and learned gentleman, the Solicitor-General, who has alluded to the postponement of this question, to consider

what they would think of a father of a numerous family, with a large estate, who should postpone to arrange and settle his affairs, after it should have been made clear to him, that if he neglected to do so, his estate might probably be wasted in chancery, and his children, instead of succeeding quietly to their inheritance, involved in litigation and discord. There is one member of this House, of whom I need not ask that question. The right honourable Secretary of State told us, the other night, that he should consider it a great calamity to have his concerns, and the interests of his family, involved in a chancery suit, and that he would rather make great sacrifices, than incur such an evil. I have no doubt that, as a prudent man, he has taken every precaution which it becomes the father of a family to take, for the purpose of guarding against such an evil. I wish he had not advised the father of a larger family, the head of a great nation, in a case of such fearful complexity, and which ought to be governed by similar considerations, to risk that postponement, which no man would be inclined to give way to in his own case. If, however, the advisers of the Crown should give that counsel, relative to the interests of the Throne and the State, which they would not give with regard to their own, it is but justice, that the responsibility attached to that advice should rest on the heads of its authors; and that the minority in this House, as I anticipate the advocates of an immediate appointment of a Regency will be, should be exonerated from any share in the responsibility of adopting a course which is full of complexity and possible confusion, in the event of so fearful a contingency as that in contemplation.

All that has been said, as to the inexpediency of pressing the subject on the attention of the new Monarch at the present moment, who is busy, we are told, in arranging the affairs of his household, falls to the ground, the moment it

is recollected, of how much greater importance such arrangement must be, than matters of ceremony, or of private convenience and accommodation. The public convenience and public safety are paramount objects, and there must be abundant time to provide for both, if the disposition existed to press them on the mind of the illustrious individual most interested. The supporters of the present motion have nothing to apprehend from the attempt made to implicate them in a charge of implied disrespect to the character of that illustrious individual. It is unworthy of refutation. The charge is levelled at, and against, the responsible Ministers of the Crown, for having neglected that which, under the circumstances, was their obvious duty. The sole object of the motion is to assert a right, which is equally applicable to parties interested in the appointment of a guardian to the heir of property, or to the heir of the throne of these realms; except that, in the present instance, when public and general objects are at issue, the anxiety of all men ought to be proportioned to the magnitude of the risk which is run, and the danger which may possibly result to the security of the Crown, and the safety and tranquillity of the State.

The House divided: For the motion, 93. Against it, 247.

APPENDIX.

No. I. Prospectus du " Journal de la Société de 1789."

II. Discours prononcé par M. Huskisson, Anglois et Membre de la Société de 1789, à la Séance de cette Société, le 29 Août 1790.

III. Speech at the Liverpool Election, February 14, 1823.

IV. Speech at the Public Dinner, given to him, in the Council Chamber, Chichester, the 3d of April 1823.

V. Speech at the Public Meeting, held at Freemasons' Hall, on the 18th June 1824, for erecting a Monument to the late James Watt.

VI. Speech at Liverpool, on his Re-election, February 5, 1828.

APPENDIX.

No. I.

PROSPECTUS OF THE "JOURNAL DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DE 1789."

[*Referred to in Biographical Memoir*, p. 13.]

—— 5 Juin 1790.

JOURNAL DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DE 1789.

Les arrangemens intérieurs de la Société de 1789 ayant retardé de quelques jours la publication de ce Journal, nous avons cru devoir en remettre le Prospectus sous les yeux des lecteurs.

PROSPECTUS.

Il est, pour les individus, un art d'assurer et d'augmenter leur bonheur : il consiste jusqu'ici dans la philosophie morale, que les anciens portèrent à une sorte de perfection.

Il doit exister aussi, pour les nations, un art de maintenir et d'étendre leur félicité : c'est ce qu'on a nommé l'*art social*.

Cette science, pour laquelle travaillent toutes les autres, ne paroit pas avoir été encore étudiée dans son ensemble. L'art de cultiver, l'art de commercer, l'art de gouverner, l'art de raisonner même, ne sont que des parties de cette science : elles ont pris chacune à part une sorte d'accroissement ; mais, sans doute, ces membres isolés ne parviendront à leur développement complet que lorsqu'ils auront été rapprochés, et qu'ils formeront un corps bien organisé.

Réunir tant de matériaux épars et inconsistans, rechercher dans les sciences économiques leur rapport mutuel, et surtout la liaison commune qu'elles peuvent avoir avec la science générale de la civilisation, tel est l'objet de l'*art social*.

Ce n'est ni un, ni plusieurs hommes, ni même une seule nation, c'est le concert des peuples qui peut assurer à cet art des progrès efficaces ; mais ces progrès seront moins lents, dès que tous les esprits suivront par-tout un ordre de travail constant et uniforme.

Il faut donc créer cette méthode commune. Or, avant qu'elle soit fixée, perfectionnée, et généralement adoptée, il étoit naturel que les bases en fussent posées par une association, qui, communiquant à d'autres sociétés semblables, les principes et l'esprit qui l'animent, pût, ainsi qu'elles, rallier à des systêmes pareils les divers travaux de tous les hommes éclairés, en quelque lieu qu'ils existent, et qu'ils veillent pour le bien de l'humanité.

Tel est le plan sur lequel s'est formée la Société de 1789.

Elle a pensé qu'on avait jusqu'à présent retiré trop peu d'avantages de ces instrumens de communication, par lesquels nous pouvons nous rendre si supérieurs aux anciens; et qui doivent étendre le commerce de la pensée, comme celui de toutes les autres richesses du globe. Elle a donc voulu multiplier entre les nations les échanges réciproques des connaissances humaines.

C'est pour cela qu'une partie essentielle de son institution est une correspondance suivie avec toutes les sociétés et tous les individus, tant nationaux qu'étrangers, qui voudront coopérer à une si noble entreprise.

Ainsi, la Société de 1789 doit être considérée comme un centre de correspondance pour tous les principes généraux, et non pas comme un foyer de coalition pour des opinions particulières. Ce n'est ni une secte, ni un parti, mais une *compagnie* d'amis des hommes, et, pour ainsi dire, d'*agens* du commerce des vérités sociales.

Développer et répandre les principes d'une constitution libre, est sans doute le premier devoir d'une institution qui date de l'époque de la liberté Française: la Société de 1789 sera fidelle à ce devoir. En même tems que ses travaux se dirigeront vers son principal but, qui est la recherche des principes et des moyens de perfectionnement de l'*art social*, elle consacrera aussi ses veilles à faire une heureuse application de ces principes à la constitution et à la félicité nationale.

Pour remplir ces différentes vues le premier moyen devait être la publication d'un Journal, qui ne fût point une collection de nouvelles, de faits, et de pièces, mis au jour sans choix et sans liaison, à mesure qu'ils se presentent; mais plutôt un recueil de mémoires sur les divers parties, et sur tout l'ensemble de l'économie sociale, ou même d'observations sur les événemens qui interessent les principes et les progrès de cette science, ainsi nouvelle qu'elle est étendue.

Le Journal de la Société de 1789 a été conçu dans cette idée. Il sera divisé en cinq chapitres, dont les titres différens indiquent les divers objets:—1. Art social. 2. Correspondance nationale. 3. Correspondance étrangère. 4. Assemblée Nationale. 5. Variétés.

No. II.

Mr. Huskisson's Speech delivered in the "Société de 1789," at Paris, August 29, 1790, on Paper Money.

[*Referred to in Biographical Memoir*, p. 13.]

DISCOURS PRONONCÉ PAR M. HUSKISSON,

Anglois et Membre de la Société de 1789, *à la Séance de cette Société, le* 29 *Août* 1790.

SUR LES ASSIGNATS.

Pour liquider la dette exigible, qui monte à mille neuf cents millions; on a proposé à l'Assemblée Nationale:

1°. De créer pour deux milliards d'assignats:

2°. De mettre en vente les biens nationaux:

3°. De ne reçevoir en échange de ces biens que ces mêmes assignats.

A l'égard de la seconde proposition, qui a pour objet la vente des biens nationaux; il paroît que tout le monde est d'accord, qu'il faut s'en défaire de manière ou d'autre; mais je crois que la méthode proposée dans les parties première et troisième du projet de décret est mauvaise: non-seulement parcequ'elle nécessite une opération inutile; mais encore parcequ'il en résulteroit des malheurs très-effrayans pour la France. Opération inutile, parceque tous ceux à qui vous donneriez ces assignats en paiement ont déjà des titres de créance sur l'état; titres que vous avez reconnus sacrés: ainsi, en leur donnant des assignats vous ne feriez que changer la forme des titres.

Les assignats auront, dit-on, deux avantages:

1°. Celui d'être des signes uniformes pour tous.

2°. Qu'on pourra acheter, vendre, et transmettre ces signes uniformes beaucoup plus aisément que les différens contrats que possèdent aujourd'hui les créanciers de la dette exigible.

Le premier avantage est nul, puisqu'il faudroit, pour vérifier et examiner tous les contrats avant de les convertir en assignats, faire le même travail qu'on feroit avant de les prendre en paiement des domaines nationaux.

Cette reflexion rend même le second avantage beaucoup moins important; car il seroit facile de recevoir les déclarations de tous ceux

qui voudroient convertir leurs contrats en biens fonds : à l'égard de ceux qui n'auroient pas cette volonté, ou de ceux à qui l'état devroit des sommes trop petites, je ne vois, à la vérité, d'autre ressource qu'une nouvelle émission d'assignats, mais faite avec des mesures, que je crois indispensables, et que j'indiquerai ci-après."

Jusqu'à present nous n'avons considéré les assignats que sous un rapport; celui d'un gage nouveau, uniforme à la vérité ; mais non pas plus assuré que l'ancien. Maintenant nous allons les envisager sous un autre point de vue ; celui de *papier-monnoie*. Ainsi il s'agit à présent d'examiner quelles seroient les conséquences d'une somme aussi énorme de *papier-monnoie* mise tout-à-coup en circulation.

C'est ici que je crois voir les suites les plus alarmantes. En vain le courage et l'habileté de vos législateurs auroient jusqu'ici préservé le vaisseau public du naufrage ; je doute que tous leurs efforts puissent le faire échapper à cette nouvelle tempête.

En effet, quand le commerce de la France étoit assez florissant, quand ses manufactures étoient en activité, supposez que, par un hasard quelconque, le numéraire alors en circulation eût été augmenté tout-à-coup de la somme de deux milliards ; qu'en seroit-il resulté ?—une grande baisse dans le prix de l'argent ; c'est-à-dire, il en auroit fallu davantage pour se procurer la même quantité de toutes les autres marchandises ; lesquelles, pour parler la langue ordinaire, seroient devenues plus chères. Mais comme les métaux précieux sont des objets de commerce, qui ont une valeur à-peu-près égale dans toute l'Europe ; devenus à vil prix en France, toutes les nations se seroient empressées d'en acheter ; bientôt le prix des marchandises auroit partout été augmenté, et l'équilibre se seroit rétabli de lui-même.

Ce qui dans cette hypothèse seroit arrivé à l'argent, arriveroit infailliblement au papier-monnoie, avec cette différence, que les assignats ne seroient pas achetés dans les autres pays de l'Europe.

Dans un moment où votre commerce intérieur est très-diminué, où toutes vos manufactures languissent, la France se trouveroit surchargée de papier-monnoie, qui tomberoit nécessairement en non valeur: par consequent toutes les autres marchandises augmenteroient beaucoup de prix : mais comme l'or et l'argent sont marchandises ; comme ils ont un prix marchand dans tout les pays de l'Europe ; et comme la quantité de ces métaux, ne seroit pas augmentée, ils conserveroient leur prix ; et il faudroit peut-être un assignat de mille livres pour acheter deux cents livres en argent, comme il en

faudroit un également de mille livres pour acquérir la même quantité de blé, qui s'achetoit auparavant avec deux cents livres en argent.

C'est ce qui est arrivé en Amérique: et qu'on ne m'objecte pas le grand nombre et la valeur des biens nationaux sur lesquels les assignats seroient hypothéqués; car on peut véritablement dire, que le papier-monnoie des Américains avoit pour hypothèque tous les biens fonds des Etats-Unis; puisque pour la plus grande sûreté possible, les citoyens avoient engagé leurs biens particuliers avec les domaines des Etats: c'est aussi ce qui est arrivé à la banque d'*Aire* en Ecosse, pour le succès de laquelle beaucoup de grandes terres de ce pays étoient hypothéquées, et qui a néanmoins failli, quoiqu'elle n'eût pas, à beaucoup près, fait une émission de billets égale à la valeur des biens qui en répondoient. C'est, enfin, ce qui arrive jusqu'à un certain point en France, où un bien fonds de trois milliards n'est encore grevé que d'une hypothèque de quatre cents millions; et cependant des assignats portant trois pour cent d'intérêt, perdent cinq, et même six pour cent.

Un papier-monnoie n'aura jamais toute la confiance nécessaire, à moins d'être des billets au porteur, qu'on puisse convertir en espèces quand on voudra. Il faut montrer au possesseur d'assignats un gage qu'il puisse avoir à toute heure; qui, ayant un valeur par lui-même, soit le signe représentatif de toutes les autres richesses, et qui puisse aisément se transmettre d'un bout du royaume à l'autre. Quand vous serez sortis de la crise actuelle, établissez une banque national; et alors un fond en argent de cinquante millions suffiroit peut-être à vous donner un crédit que vous ne pouvez obtenir aujourd'hui avec trois milliards de fonds de terre; et par lequel vous seriez en état de faire une émission de quatre cents millions d'assignats, qui même, sans porter d'intérêt, se soutiendroient au pair dans la circulation.

Sans m'arrêter davantage à faire voir les conséquences effrayantes d'une si grande émission d'assignats, je me hâterai de finir, en faisant connoître mon opinion sur ce que je crois qu'il faudroit faire.

Il me paroît tres-important, pour des raisons connues de tout le monde, que les biens nationaux soient mis en vente le plutôt possible: je crois donc que l'Assemblée Nationale devroit decréter:

1°. " Que tous les créanciers de la dette exigible, à qui l'état devroit plus de mille livres, et qui voudroient acquérir des biens nationaux, n'auroient qu'à produire leurs titres de créance, qui seroient reçus dans les ventes comme les assignats actuellement en circulation;

et qu'en attendant que ces nouveaux propriétaires pussent entrer en jouissance de leurs acquisitions, ces titres porteroient, comme les assignats, un intérêt de trois pour cent.

2°. " Qu'il seroit fait une nouvelle émission d'assignats en nombre suffisant ; et en billets depuis cinq cents livres jusqu'à vint-cinq livres, et portant également intérêt à trois pour cent, pour acheter tous les titres de créance qui seroient de moins de mille livres, ou qui appartiendroient à des personnes qui ne voudroient pas les échanger contre des biens nationaux."

Comme la nation seroit toujours prête à reprendre ces assignats en échange des terres, et qu'elle pourroit même leur donner la préférence ; je crois qu'elle peut, sans danger pour la chose publique, accorder cette facilité à ceux qui ne voudroient pas des biens nationaux : les gens riches, et les ci-devant seigneurs, à qui est dû le rachât d'une infinité de petits droits supprimés, seroient bien aises d'être payés en assignats pour acheter des terres : c'est ainsi, je crois, que vous pourriez liquider la dette exigible, et vendre les domaines de l'état, sans courir la risque d'un bouleversement général.

Je n'ajoute plus qu'une reflexion.

On a cru que cette grande émission d'assignats attacheroit à la révolution beaucoup de personnes mécontentes, ou qui la voient avec indifférence. On a fait valoir cet argument comme s'il étoit de la plus grande importance. C'est avec un sentiment de douleur que je me suis dit, en lisant cette partie du discours de M. de Mirabeau ; et quoi ! une révolution qui à tiré vingt-quatre millions d'hommes de l'esclavage, pour leur rendre les droits sacrés de la nature, auroît elle besoin d'un appui aussi dangereux ? Non ; je ne puis le croire ; voulez-vous d'ailleurs diminuer le nombre de ces égoistes agioteurs ? voulez-vous en faire des patriotes ? faites-en des propriétaires : au lieu de tant de droits féodaux, de dixmes, et d'impôts vexatoires, au lieu de ces privilèges, de ces exemptions accordées au hasard par cet amas de sous-despotes, qui ne protégeoient les uns que pour peser plus durement sur les autres, les nouveaux propriétaires n'auront plus à payer qu'un impôt juste, égal, et modique, dont la perception et l'emploi seront surveillés par eux : que de motifs pour aimer la révolution, pour la défendre comme le plus grand des bienfaits ; que de motifs pour s'attacher à la constitution, comme à l'unique appui de cette égalité dont ils jouissent, et à l'unique sauve-garde de leurs propriétés nouvelles !

No. III.

Mr. Huskisson's Speech at the Liverpool Election, February, 14, 1823.

[*Referred to in Biographical Memoir*, p. 10.]

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen Freemen:—

Standing before you, in consequence of the invitation which I have received from a very large and respectable body of the freemen of this great and enlightened community, as a candidate for the honour of representing you in Parliament, I can assure you, that the first feeling which I bring to these hustings is a sincere and ardent wish, that, on the part of all contending parties, there may prevail the utmost harmony and good humour. No endeavours will be wanting on my part, and none, I trust, will be wanting on the part of my friends, to maintain and promote those feelings on the present occasion.

Other candidates having been proposed for your choice, far be it from me to complain, either of the language or the arguments by which the pretensions of those candidates have been recommended and supported. The honourable freeman who put in nomination the noble lord (not, I believe, present on this occasion) did no more than his duty, entertaining the political sentiments and the views of the constitution which he is known to entertain, in recommending that noble lord to your choice, as a person likely to support those principles in Parliament.

But I am sorry that I must be under the necessity, before I proceed to advert to some of the topics which the honourable freeman urged with no ordinary ability, to relieve myself from some other grounds of objection, which, though they have not been stated to-day, have been brought forward against me elsewhere; and I should consider it a forfeiture of all pretensions to character—a forfeiture of all chance of obtaining your good opinion, if I were to pass those objections unnoticed. I trust, therefore, that I shall be forgiven if I advert, in the first instance, to those objections, in order to vindicate my own character, and, as far as character is concerned, your selection of me as a candidate.

Gentlemen, arriving here late on Monday night, in compliance with an invitation which I had received from you, and being too much indisposed on Tuesday to pay my respects to the freemen, the first thing of which I was informed was, that papers were placarded about the town, in which it was stated, that "being an alien, I was

disqualified from sitting in the House of Commons." If those placards had been anonymous, I should have considered their libellous abuse as only a part of that unworthy warfare which too frequently prevails during an election contest, and of which no man who is a candidate for popular favour ought perhaps to complain. In that case, I should have passed them over in silence, and with the contempt which they deserve. But when I found that the most calumnious of those placards had received the signature of an individual whose name was unknown to me, as his person is still unknown, I naturally asked (so extraordinary was the calumny) whether that individual was some unfortunate being who had escaped from a lunatic asylum? Judge of my surprise, when I was told that he was a gentleman clothed with magisterial powers, one of his Majesty's justices for the conservation of the peace of this great and populous county. It is because that gentleman holds this situation of trust in this county (I will not now inquire how worthily), that I think it necessary to advert to his allegations against me.

Gentlemen, I now hold in my hand this placard, in which it is stated, not by insinuation, but in direct terms, that I am an "illegitimate alien," and, as such, disqualified from sitting in Parliament. I stand, therefore, before you in this most singular situation, that, having been invited to Liverpool, in order to become a candidate for the greatest political honour and the highest trust which the suffrages of a free people can bestow, and to which an English gentleman can aspire, I am here called upon to show not my pretensions (if any I have) to your confidence, but that I possess those ordinary civil rights which the laws do not deny to the meanest of his Majesty's subjects. Gentlemen, this charge, thus placarded on the walls of your town, is printed in the largest Roman type that the printing-office, I believe, of the honourable freeman who proposed Lord Molyneux could supply, and, let me add, in ink as black as the malignity which could suggest such a publication. [Here Dr. Crompton made some remark respecting the word "malignity," applied by Mr. Huskisson.] Gentlemen, I am far from complaining of the interruption of the honourable candidate. When I used the word malignity, I used it advisedly. I repeat it. I care not whom it pleases; and I apply it to the author of this libel, be he who he may. A baser libel and a fouler calumny never was thrown on an Englishman; and never, let me add, was there attempted a grosser imposition upon the freemen of the town of Liverpool. Gentlemen, I scorn to disprove, however indignantly I repel, that part of this false

accusation which applies to my parents; but let me say, that they were both English; that I was born and educated in England; that in England I received the rudiments of my education, of which a reverence for the free constitution of my country formed a part; and that I never left my native shores until that education was nearly completed. I, therefore, trust, I am not to be told, that I do not possess those civil rights, without which I should, indeed, be an alien in my native land, and could not aspire to the common privileges of a subject, much less to the honours of this free and happy country.

It is to me most surprising, that any gentleman should rashly have put his name to such an assertion as I have now adverted to. Good God! is it to be presumed, that for twenty-seven years an alien should have had the honour of a seat in Parliament? Is it to be believed, that I should presume to stand before you, if I were conscious of any thing that could attach to my character so fatal to my pretensions as that which is now charged against me? Indeed, the very absurdity of the proposition ought to have guarded a magistrate from lending the sanction of his name to such an imputation. Is he so ignorant as not to know, that, if I did not possess the civil rights of a subject, I could not hold land, or take the oaths requisite to qualify me to sit in Parliament? He refers you to one act of Anne; if he looked to another, he would have found that a reward is given to the discoverer of property which had escheated to the Crown. And I wish the gallant colonel (for I understand that he is a Colonel as well as a Magistrate) so little harm in return for the injury he has levelled at me, that I would recommend to him to try to make the discovery of what freehold property I possess; and if, as he alleges, I am an "illegitimate alien," I promise him, that he shall receive the reward to which, for that discovery, he will be entitled.

Perhaps, Gentlemen, I have a right to complain, that when any member of the community has put forth these aspersions, he does not meet me here, face to face, to prove and establish his charge. Gentlemen, he ought to be here to make an apology, if not to me, to the freemen of Liverpool, for the imposition which this placard attempted to palm upon them.

Gentlemen, I am sorry to detain you so long on a subject so entirely personal; but, when a man is a candidate for popular favour, it behoves him first to clear himself from imputations which malevolence attempts to fix upon his individual character.

Other grounds of disqualification, however, are urged against me.

Unquestionably, Gentlemen, according to the constitution which Colonel Williams wishes to give to this country, and in which the worthy freeman who proposed Lord Molyneux seems to concur, I should be disqualified; but, according to the constitution of England as it has prevailed at all times, and more especially since the Revolution, I am not disqualified. It is only a further proof of that confusion of intellect, of which the gallant colonel has furnished so many examples, to find him stating as a *legal* disqualification, which would at once close the doors of the House of Commons against me, his individual opinion of what ought to be the nature of that constitution. The plain question, therefore is, are we to be guided by the spirit of the constitution and the letter of the law, or by the wishes of those whose views (I say nothing of their intentions) would lead to the subversion of the one and the other?

Now, Gentlemen, I can assure you, that, having disposed of what I must consider as an objection in bar to my becoming a candidate at all, I am quite ready to admit, that I do not come here with any personal pretensions to your favour. I disclaim them altogether. Never would it have occurred to me to offer myself to your notice on these hustings, if I had not been invited by a very numerous and respectable body of freemen. I will not waste your time by going into any vindication of the public principles upon which I have acted, because I trust that those public principles are known to the freemen of Liverpool; because I hope and believe that it was in consequence of your approbation of those principles that you honoured me with that invitation. Gentlemen, it is not likely that I should now swerve from those principles; and the honourable gentleman who opened the discussion is perfectly right in supposing, that my public conduct in Parliament will not, should I be the member for Liverpool, differ from what it has hitherto been. Gentlemen, I am ready to avow to you, and I take pride in making the avowal, that I am not likely to desert those principles and those attachments to which the honourable gentleman has objected. Since my arrival in this town, I have seen and heard much to confirm me in the impression, that it is only by a steady adherence to those principles that I can entitle myself to your approbation and support. I should have been sorry that, in a community so extensive and so intelligent, there should not be, as there will be among Englishmen, a great difference of opinion, as to the course which public men ought to follow in their endeavours to promote the happiness of the country. I firmly believe, however, notwithstanding the contrary opinion so strongly entertained by the worthy freeman, that the public

principles which I profess, are not only in unison with those of the great majority of the freemen of Liverpool, but also with the principles of the great majority of the people of England.

Gentlemen, the objections which have been made by the worthy freeman to my election are, as far as they rest on public grounds, the same in substance as were urged to the election of the distinguished public character who has now retired from your service. Gentlemen, the retirement of Mr. Canning I consider as no common occurrence. I consider it, and, I am sure, all of you must consider it, as the loss of no common representative. Gentlemen, it is no common occurrence which has compelled him to decline to renew to you the offer of his services. In the present critical circumstances of the country, more critical, perhaps, in reference to the peace and happiness of the continent, and eventually, perhaps, of England, than any which have occurred since the breaking out of the French revolution,—my right honourable friend occupies that exalted, but arduous and responsible situation in the councils of his country, in which every man feels, that to his energy, to his prudence, and to his talents, is committed principally the momentous task of endeavouring to avert those calamities which must be the result of the attempt to impose on a gallant and free people,—or, at least, a people struggling for freedom,—an interference in their institutions, the principle of which I detest as much as the honourable gentleman himself (Mr. Rushton) can detest it.

Let me not be misunderstood: I will always maintain the right of a country, if its internal security or its public tranquillity be obviously exposed to danger from the machinations of a neighbouring power, to take such measures as may be necessary to preserve its own institutions, and to vindicate and assure its own independence. It is no business of mine to advocate or justify the new constitution of Spain. In many respects it is, I am afraid, very faulty; but of this I am clear, that Spain has a right, undeniable and paramount, as an independent state, to alter its internal institutions in such manner and to such extent as it may think proper, with a view to its own separate government, and to endeavour to acquire and secure the blessings of civil and religious liberty. It is quite consistent in me to object to rash and theoretical innovations in this country, where freedom has so long taken root and flourished, and to think that such an experiment as is now making for the establishment of free institutions is justifiable in a country which has been so long suffering and falling to decay from the want of such institutions. Spain had the right to

make the experiment. She has made it; and, in the course of that experiment, be it successful or be it unsuccessful,—successful, I trust, it will be,—Spain has hitherto kept herself within those limits which belong to her existence as an independent state. The Sovereigns of Europe have no better right to interfere with Spain, on this account, than they have to interfere in the internal concerns of England, or of any other independent state. Therefore, let me not be represented as wishing to countenance those monstrous principles which have been lately avowed. As an Englishman I disclaim them; and, I fear, if they are to be avowed and acted upon, as part of the new public law of Europe, that they may lead to wars and calamities greater and more durable (great as have been the sufferings of the late war) than any which have desolated the continent, since those wars of opinion, which grew out of the equally frantic attempt, to put down by arms the doctrines of those who doubted the infallibility of the Church of Rome. If the absolute monarchs of the continent are prepared to involve all Europe, perhaps, in war, upon the principles put forth in the King of France's speech, it is not for me to predict what may be the final issue of such a tremendous struggle.

Now, Gentlemen, another of the objections which were made to me by the worthy freeman was, that I had supported measures which he thinks are to be compared to the present conduct of the powers of the continent; measures which became necessary, in my judgment, for the preservation of the constitution and the liberty of this country, at the period of the French revolution. Gentlemen, I did support those measures, because I felt they were necessary for our security and independence. The country, too, supported those measures, because, in common with the Parliament, they were convinced of their necessity, in order to prevent Europe from being one vast military monarchy, in the hands of the greatest enemy to the peace of the world, and, above all, to the independence and commerce of England, that has existed in modern times. These efforts could not be sustained without great sacrifices; but they were finally crowned with that success which restored to England the blessings of peace, with all the glory of having, by her perseverance, finally achieved the independence of Europe.

Gentlemen, it gives me great pain, when I hear, in this and in other places, that the efforts made to accomplish so great and glorious an object have entailed on us a load of debt which we cannot pay. Gentlemen, I deny this alleged inability to meet our engage-

ments. I trust that the country will—I am sure the country can, faithfully and honourably discharge all its obligations. It is no light matter, at a period like the present, to call in question the public faith and the public honour of England. God knows how soon,—though, I trust, the necessity may not occur,—we may be compelled again to resort to the aid of that public credit. In England, public credit is public power; it is the staff of our security. When, however, I say this, let me not be considered as meaning to imply, that England could not defend her own independence, if attacked on her own shores, without the aid of public credit. But I declare, that I have no conception that England could maintain her rank among the nations of the world, if we once lay the axe to the root of public credit. Without that credit, the name of England might still be mentioned, for some few years, with respect by the great potentates of the world; but it would no longer be that England which checked the ambition of Louis the Fourteenth; which, in the Seven Year's war, stretched out with one hand succour and support to the feeble states of Germany, whilst with the other she sent forth her fleets to conquest and triumph in every quarter of the world. It would no longer be that England which again, and in a greater degree, rescued Europe in the late tremendous struggle, whilst its naval superiority was still more successfully asserted and maintained. Therefore, Gentlemen, let us not think lightly of the advantages of public credit. I see nothing in the situation of the country which can endanger the security of the public creditor; and it is not a little surprising, that amidst all the comforts which the industrious classes are enjoying, and in this county and in this town in particular; amidst the growing improvement of the public revenue, and when that improvement as you have heard from his Majesty's speech, admits of the reduction of the public burdens; it is, I say, not a little surprising, that, under such circumstances, the worthy freeman should talk of breaking the public faith.

Therefore, Gentlemen, if I have no other sin upon my head; if I have no other crime to answer for, than that which has been put forward by the worthy freeman, namely, that I have supported measures which entail the necessity of a public bankruptcy, I own that I feel little anxiety on that score. I am sure England will maintain its honour untarnished by a breach of public faith; and so convinced am I that it possesses resources fully adequate to that object, that I have no apprehension of our not being enabled, by the aid of that

credit, if necessary, to provide for any exigency which the honour of the country may require.

Another charge, Gentlemen, against me is, that I gave my support to certain acts of parliament, in 1819, which, described as they were by the honourable gentleman, would appear to have been nothing less than the total destruction of the constitution. Similar sentiments, I know, were uttered in Parliament when these measures were under consideration. They have now been the law of this country for some years; and I would appeal to those among you who recollect the then state of the country, of this county in particular, and of the manufacturing districts generally, first, whether there was not a necessity for some legislative measures; and secondly, whether you feel yourselves now, by the effect of those measures, deprived of the benefits of the constitution.

When we talk of the British constitution, Gentlemen, we do not mean any little book which contains it, like the constitution of France or of other countries, divided into chapters, and sections, and articles; but we mean, I apprehend, those privileges and rights belonging, by prescription and common law right, to several classes of the community; together with those institutions which have been provided by Parliament for the security of those rights and privileges. But am I to be told, that it is not one of the first principles of the constitution to do that which is the first object of all good government—to provide against those dangers which threaten the security of life, the security of property, the security of liberty itself? Gentlemen, did not such dangers exist and threaten the general peace of the community in the year 1819? And is the security of all these blessings, in this county in particular, impaired or improved by the measures which were then enacted? If there exists a greater degree of security for life, for property, for liberty, and an improved confidence that the fruits of honest industry are no longer endangered by the inability of the magistrates to suppress lawless mobs, and the spirit of plunder and spoliation, I contend that those laws, so far from being subversive, are rather to be considered as props and stays, of the constitution. Gentlemen, it was in the entire confidence that such would be their result, that I supported them in my place in Parliament.

I fear, Gentlemen, that I have trespassed too long on your time already—[cries of "No! no!"]; but I will endeavour to compress what I have to say into as narrow a compass as possible.

Gentlemen, the other objections which were made to me were merely of a personal nature; but I wish not, on that account, to pass them unnoticed. I think that the objection, as stated, in the first instance, by the worthy proposer of Lord Molyneux, amounted very nearly to this, that in his opinion, he coincided with the proposition contained in this most valuable publication which I hold in my hand —[a laugh.] I am not now speaking of the calumny cast upon me in one part of that publication, of my being disqualified, by birth, to sit in Parliament. I think, if I understand Mr. Rushton's objection rightly, it is, that no person holding any office of trust under the Crown ought to be a member of Parliament. Gentlemen, this is a favourite doctrine amongst many of those who are the advocates of what they consider a radical reform; but I have no difficulty in stating, that, in our constitution, it is, at least, a new doctrine. It was not the practice of our ancestors; it is not the law of the land. I may, therefore, content myself with referring to the best times of our history, and to the acknowledged principles of our laws, as being at variance with the doctrine, not, I believe, of the Whigs, but of the radical reformers of the present day. But I will not conceal from you, that I think it is among the benefits of the constitution, that those who administer the public affairs of this country have seats in the House of Commons, where they are to account for their conduct as servants of the crown; to afford such explanations as Parliament may require; to originate such measures as their responsible situations in the state may point out to be necessary; and to maintain a spirit of harmony and co-operation between the Crown and the Parliament, so long as they retain the confidence of the one, and are thought deserving of support from the other. This support they cannot long enjoy, if they have not the support of public opinion; for, Gentlemen, I have no difficulty in saying that it is absolutely impossible for any set of men, be their talents what they may, long to maintain themselves in the situation of ministers of the crown, unless they have, at the same time, the confidence of the majority of the people. I am so strongly impressed with this feeling, that it was no small part of the inducement which stimulated my ambition, at the expense of many personal feelings which connected me with another seat, to accept the invitation of so large, so important, and so enlightened a community as that of Liverpool: and it is now for you to decide, whether my situation in the service of the crown renders me undeserving of your confidence and support. If men in office are to be excluded from that great *arena* of legitimate ambition, the House

of Commons, is it not to be apprehended, that out of doors the struggle for power will soon assume some more irregular and dangerous course? If, then, it be your opinion, as I believe it is the opinion of all who understand the constitution, that a certain number of the servants of the crown ought to sit in Parliament, I hope I may, notwithstanding Mr. Rushton's objection, be considered by you as not disqualified to represent Liverpool.

Now, Gentlemen, with respect to what was stated by another worthy freeman opposite (Mr. John Harvey), that I am disqualified, as holding a pension from the Crown, I can have no wish, and, if I had a wish, it would be futile to attempt to conceal from you any thing which I may hold from the Crown. I will, therefore, admit to the honourable gentleman, that it pleased his late Majesty, in the year 1801, on my retiring from a situation which I had filled, to bestow upon me a pension, not exceeding, in amount, the usual remuneration bestowed on individuals who had filled a similar situation in the public service. I will not say that, in my case, the remuneration had been earned by any merits of my own; but of this I am sure, that it was far short of that which had been given to many of my predecessors. I have now for thirty years been in the public service. During those thirty years I have held situations under the Crown, the duties of which I have endeavoured to discharge, certainly not with the ability I could wish (for that was wanting), but I may appeal even to those who have been opposed to me in politics, whether I have been deficient in diligence, assiduity, or fidelity, in the discharge of my public duties. I can safely and conscientiously say, that the offices which I filled during a great part of that period were of the most laborious and confidential nature, and that their emoluments were not more than sufficient to afford me the means of filling that station which the offices themselves conferred on me in society. Well, Gentlemen, this shameful, this lavish remuneration which I enjoy amounts to this: that I hold a contingent pension, from which, so long as I continue in office, I receive no advantage, but which, when, from declining years, from infirmities, or from any other circumstances, I shall no longer be in the public service, will afford me, after the deductions to which it is liable, something less than 900*l.* a year. I confidently appeal to the liberality, to the judgment of the community which I am now addressing, whether, after having spent a life in the public service, which, if devoted to other pursuits, might, perhaps, have afforded me, if not opulence, the means of independence, I have received an undue or unreasonable

reward?—(Cries of "No; you have not.") One circumstance I must mention, which, at least, tends to prove, that the feelings of those who were most anxious for economical reform concur with the feeling which you have so kindly manifested on this subject. In the year 1817, a bill was brought into Parliament for abolishing high and lucrative offices which were become sinecures. But the friends of reform, who brought in that bill, thought it essential, that, upon those sinecures being abolished, the power of granting pensions, to a limited amount, should be given to the Crown, for the purpose of conferring suitable rewards on those who had served the public in certain laborious and responsible offices of the State. Now, Gentlemen, amongst other enactments in that act, which was brought in by the most zealous advocate of economical reform in the House of Commons, and supported by all the opposition, there was a provision enabling the Crown to confer on any person, having filled the offices which I have held, not 900*l.* but 1,500*l.* a year; and it was further provided, that such person might receive one half of that pension whilst he enjoyed any other office. Therefore, Gentlemen, I have now a reversionary pension of 900*l.* only, when I might have had that reversion increased to 1,500*l.* with this further advantage, that I might now be in the possession of one half of that larger sum.

Gentlemen, I have detained you far too long on this topic; but it was necessary that I should vindicate my own conduct, and that I should not, without some explanation, suffer myself to be represented to you in the character of a sordid, grasping adventurer, who only seeks power to advance his own selfish interests.

Now, Gentlemen, it is well known to you all, that if I held this pension subject to the pleasure of the Crown, I should be incapacitated from holding a seat in Parliament.—[Here Mr. Harvey said, it was not to the amount of the pension, which he thought fairly earned by Mr. Huskisson, but to its necessary effect on his vote that he objected.]—I thank the honourable freeman for this candid statement of his objection, to which my short reply is, that, in point of fact, at one period since I received this favour from the Crown, and when I was in the actual enjoyment of it, I was, at the same time in pretty constant opposition to those who were the Ministers of the Crown.

Gentlemen, I must again apologize for detaining you so long; but it is necessary that I should answer the personal objections which have been brought against me as a candidate for your suffrages.

Gentlemen, I am sure that I feel very much the honour of standing before you on the present occasion. I have placed myself in a situation in which I am afraid that, in aspiring to the ambition of representing a place like Liverpool, I have been guilty of an act of great rashness.—(Cries of No, no!)—For ten years the post to which you have encouraged me to aspire has been filled by a man possessed, in the estimation even of his opponents, of public talents, I may say, almost unparalleled at the present time,—of abilities which have placed him in the high situation which he now holds in the councils of his country. Whatever may be the objections to him on the part of those among you who are opposed to his public principles, the praise of diligent and successful attention to their local concerns is not denied to him, even by the most determined of his opponents. Coming after such a man, services and exertions more proportionate to my poor abilities are all that I can promise, or that you can expect. However, I have obeyed your invitation, and I now place myself, an humble instrument, in your hands. My best endeavours shall not be wanting to promote the welfare of the country, and to sustain its honour; and I need hardly say, that they will always be directed to advance the interests and prosperity of Liverpool, connected as those interests and that prosperity must always be with the general prosperity of the empire; only expecting of you, as an act of justice, that you will not measure me by the standard of my predecessor.

Gentlemen, it is not for me to anticipate what may be the result of this election—though I own, I have no anxiety as to its issue. I am convinced that your support will not be withheld; and if your triumph be as complete as I expect it to be, it will, I know, be the triumph not of the individual, but of your principles. From the moment that I am vested with the trust which it is in your power alone to confer, I shall feel it my first duty to entreat from all parties, as well from my more immediate friends as from those who are opposed to me, communications, advice, and assistance, on all matters connected with your peculiar concerns and local interests, feeling conscious that it is only from such advice, assistance, and unreserved communication, that I can hope to discharge a trust at once so arduous and important.

Gentlemen, thanking you for having heard me with so much patience, I have now only to entreat, that if any thing should be said by my opponents that may require further explanation on my part, I shall be allowed that indulgence.

After a reply from Mr. Rushton,

Mr. Huskisson spoke a second time as follows:—

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen—I am sure that I should be considered wanting in what I owe to my own character, and be deficient in that respect which I owe to the freemen of Liverpool, for whose suffrages I am now a candidate, if I did not, after the second speech of the worthy freeman, briefly trespass on your time.

The first charge which he has brought against me is one to which I plead guilty; namely, that I did not advert to the thanks given to the Manchester magistrates, and to the employment of spies.

Gentlemen, I did oppose the attempts made in Parliament to stigmatize the conduct of the Manchester magistrates; and I now avow myself of opinion, that, but for their vigour, their firmness, their timely interference, there would have been set up in Manchester a standard of resistance to the laws; the possible consequences of which no man could have answered for, in the state of excitement, arising, in some degree, I admit, from distress, which then existed among the population of this great and manufacturing county, and in the manufacturing districts of other counties. I say, Gentlemen, that never in my life did I feel more satisfied that I was doing a great public duty, than in protecting those magistrates from obloquy and censure; a duty not to them only, but also to the more humble classes of the community: because, I would ask you, if the capitals which give employment to the labouring classes had been driven for protection to other countries, what would have been the fate of all those industrious manufacturers and artisans who are now enjoying, in peace and contentment, the fruits of their honest exertions? Would they not have been left to starve and pine in indigence and want, if the inactivity of the magistrates had suffered the machinations of the conspirators against the peace of the country to succeed, unchecked by their authority? This, gentlemen, is my answer with respect to what I thought was due to the timely interference of the Manchester magistrates.

With respect to the individuals alluded to, as having acted the part of spies, I cannot give an answer equally explicit. But this I will say, that, as a member of Parliament, I felt myself bound to give confidence to the reports of the Secret Committee appointed by Parliament to investigate the subject; a committee not packed, and consisting exclusively of the servants of the Crown, or of those members who give a general confidence to the servants of the Crown, but in which were to be found such men as Lord Milton and other members belonging to the opposition. That Committee stated the neces-

sity of the course which his Majesty's Government pursued. What may have been the misconduct of the individuals alluded to (and it must be admitted that such men cannot be among the most creditable members of society), I cannot therefore say, and can have no wish to vindicate it.

The honourable gentleman, in his last address, has talked to you a great deal about "corruption" and "independence." I am rather too old a member of the House of Commons not to know what is meant by these words, so common in the mouths of those who agree with him. I understand that "corruption" is the term applied to all those members who, from a general concurrence in the principles of Administration, support the measures of his Majesty's Government; and I understand by "independence" that it is the exclusive privilege of those who, on the other hand, vote on all occasions with the opponents of his Majesty's Government. But, Gentlemen, you will agree with me in thinking, that a reply, which ought, as much as possible, to be confined to explanation, is not the proper time for entering on the wide field of discussion, which the question of parliamentary reform would open before us; and I shall not, therefore, detain you by entering upon it on this occasion.

The honourable gentleman seems to insinuate that, at the commencement of the French Revolution, I was a zealous advocate for the principles of that revolution; and I am sure that the terms in which he alluded to that part of my conduct do not call from me any complaint. I might have been all which he stated without having done any thing unworthy of an Englishman. In the early period of my life, when I was about nineteen, I was in France: and if I should then have been misled by a mistaken admiration of some—of what I now think—the errors of that revolution, I trust the ardour of youth would be no discreditable excuse, and would not injure me in your estimation. But my thanks are due to the honourable gentleman for having afforded me an opportunity of stating, openly and publicly, what my conduct was at that period and under those circumstances. I am the more thankful for it, because I know that, in whispers and insinuations, that conduct has been imputed to me as disgraceful. I am aware, Gentlemen, that, among other calumnies under which I have sometimes suffered, it has been stated, that I was once an active member of the Jacobin Club. I deny that I ever belonged to that club, or to any club of that name and description, and I challenge any man to prove it. I never was but once in the Jacobin Club. I went there by their permission, as other Englishmen did, to

satisfy my own curiosity. I recollect that the late Mr. Windham was one of the party who went the same evening; and if my memory does not, at this distance of time, deceive me, another was a friend of mine, a baronet belonging to a neighbouring county, the present Sir John Stanley. But I own that I was a member of another club which was then formed in Paris, and which took the name of the "Club of 1789." The principle of that society was to support the monarchy, as settled and limited by the King's acceptance of the constitution in that year. That club was set up in opposition to the anarchical doctrines and daring endeavours of the Jacobins to destroy the monarchy, and in the hopes of proving a rallying point to those who, whilst they were anxious on the one hand, to counteract such criminal projects, were not less desirous, on the other, to prevent the return of the absolute power and abuses of the former system; neither supporting the pretensions of the old Royalists, who would admit of no limitation of restraint upon the power of the throne, nor the excesses of those who were, in fact, though not, perhaps, in intention, their best allies. The one party were struggling to restore arbitrary power, the other pursuing a course which was sure to lead, as it did ultimately lead, through spoliation and misery and oceans of blood, to a military despotism. Possibly it may have been an act of indiscretion in an Englishman to have belonged to any political society in France at that period. But I am not ashamed to avow, that I was anxious to see a rational system of liberty established in that fine country, which, while it increased the happiness of the people, should limit the extravagant power of the Crown, and prevent it from plunging the country, for the purposes of caprice or ambition, in unjust and iniquitous wars. I seldom attended, and never but once took part in the proceedings of the Club to which I have alluded; and it was for the purpose of offering my opinion against the creation of that Paper Money, which was the foundation of all the subversion of property which followed; which gave to the Jacobins the command of the resources of France; and which led, first, to the overthrow of the monarchy, and, in succession, to the subjugation of Flanders, Holland, and Italy. When the plan of issuing assignats was determined on by the Legislature, I withdrew even from the society, and never took any further part in their discussions.

If, Gentlemen, it be a crime to have thought too sanguinely of mankind at the age of nineteen, and to have believed it not impossible that liberty might be sustained against despotism, without becoming

the victim of anarchy, to that crime I plead guilty. That guilt I share in common with many great and good men. I did entertain a hope, that such would be the result of the change which had then taken place in the institutions of France. That the sagacity of the great minister who, at that time, (1790) was at the head of affairs in England, did not foresee any danger to the peace of other states from that change, may be inferred from all his measures, even up to the year 1792, when on the meeting of Parliament, the speech from the throne stated a sanguine opinion, that there was nothing in the state of Europe which threatened to involve this country in hostilities.

I am sorry, Gentlemen, to have detained you so long; but the charges brought against me to-day having been often insinuated in a less direct manner, I have only to express my satisfaction, that the honourable gentleman has afforded me an opportunity of vindicating myself from any suspicion of having been guilty of conduct unworthy of an Englishman and a friend to rational liberty; and, once more, to thank you all for the patience and attention with which you have listened to my vindication.

No. IV.

Mr. Huskisson's Speech at the Public Dinner in the Council Chamber, Chichester, the 3d of April, 1823, when the Vase was presented to Him.

[*Referred to in Biographical Memoir*, p. 95.]

Gentlemen,—It has sometimes been my lot in another place to rise with the duty imposed upon me of discussing some complicated and difficult question, and with the certainty that my view of that question would be encountered with all the ability of powerful adversaries, sharpened by all the acrimony of party feeling; but I own, that on these occasions, however inadequate to the task, I felt less embarrassment than I labour under at the present moment. There is something in political conflict which creates energy, and stimulates exertion; but kindness, at least such kindness as I have now received at your hands, is overwhelming. Whilst I feel it to be so, I must claim your indulgence, if, under the influence of that feeling, I should not be able, in terms of suitable gratitude, to acknowledge all the honours which you have conferred upon me.

Gentlemen, when I received your Address, so gratifying to me, at the close of our political connexion, I justly considered it as the highest distinction and best reward, which any representative, under such circumstances, could receive from his constituents. The sentiments of that Address,—the numerous and respectable signatures to it,—are, I am proud to say, permanently recorded upon parchment:—a parchment which I shall preserve and cherish as one of the most valuable title deeds which a public man can possess. To this written record of your friendly feelings, you are this day pleased to add, a more splendid and conspicuous, but (however imperishable the materials of which this elegant Vase is made) not, I trust, a more durable testimony of your approbation. For this further memorial of your good will, I can only repeat those thanks which your uniform kindness has so often elicited from me on former occasions. I trust that I may be allowed, in all times to come, to look to this Vase, as a proof that, in your judgment, I was not deficient in the rule which I had prescribed to myself, in the discharge of the important duties of your representativ That rule was simply this. To be diligently attentive to your peculiar interests; but at the same time to be true to what, according to my honest conviction, were the general interests of the country. For my conduct, in respect to the latter and more extensive part of my duty, I am not more responsible to you than to the whole of the people of England; but in respect to the former, I hope I may say, without fear of contradiction, that, for the ten years, during which I represented this city, its local interests, and the interests of every individual connected with it, have had, when required, my best assistance and most unremitting attention. I will only add, that those interests, however now committed to other hands, will always have a share in my most sincere and earnest good will.

In adverting to the ten years which have elapsed since you first called upon me to represent your city, it is impossible altogether to forget what portentous years they have been. Perhaps the history of this kingdom could scarcely furnish another period of equal duration so fertile in events of the greatest importance, or marked by such vicissitudes of fortune—of threatened destruction and providential deliverance—of danger and glory—of alternate alarm and security—of peace won by British perseverance, and secured by the downfall of our most formidable enemy—of war again renewed by the restoration of that inveterate foe—and of peace

again conquered by British valour, and again secured by British victory.

When our connexion began in the autumn of 1812, how awful was the situation, how appalling the prospects of this country! We were then in the twentieth year of a war, unparalleled in its character and magnitude, and which had called forth, and then more than ever required, the greatest exertions and fortitude on the part of this country. The efforts of the tyrant of Europe, of which our destruction was intended to be the final triumph, were of the most gigantic nature. At the period to which I have referred, he was absolute master of all the resources of the continent from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, from the western coast of France to Moscow; whilst England at war with him, was, as the consequence of that war, either engaged in actual hostilities, or at least shut out from all friendly intercourse with the other nations of Europe. From Archangel to Bayonne, from Gibraltar to Trieste, not a port which was not closed against our flag,—not a mile of coast from which English commerce, even in the hour of shipwreck and distress, was not repulsed with more than barbarian inhospitality.

Gentlemen, you all recollect the rancour with which Buonaparte persecuted commerce;—partly, perhaps, because it has been one of the great means of civilizing and enlightening mankind, of diffusing liberal ideas, and of creating a community of interests between nations for their mutual benefit and improvement; but mainly, I apprehend, because, with all these blessings in its train, it was, at the same time, the great source of our power, and of that maritime superiority which appeared to be the only remaining barrier between liberty, and the establishment of a system of universal unmitigated military despotism in Europe. Such was our situation in 1812; a situation of such imminent danger, as other countries, perhaps, would have attempted to avert by compromise. But this was not the feeling of England even at that crisis. Some few among us, it is true, deprecated the continuance of the struggle as hopeless; but the Government, the Parliament, and with them the great body of the people, true to the characteristic firmness of Englishmen, proclaimed that the road to peace lay not in submission but in victory. By the influence of our example, and by our exertions, the prostrate nations were roused to vindicate the many sufferings and insults which submission and compromise had brought upon them;—they rose against their oppressor; from that moment the recovery of their indepen-

dence became to us and to them a common cause;—the result was victory, and that, which to a Christian people must always be the great end, and only just use of victory—security and the restoration of peace:—a peace, of which, whatever may have been its benefit to the other nations of the world, impartial history will assign the glory and the achievement, to the vigour, the fortitude, and the exertions of this country.

Gentlemen, when I am referring to our exertions in the late war, if, instead of a retrospect to the ten years of our political connexion, I were to look back to the longer period of twenty-seven years that I have now sat in Parliament, and been more or less actively engaged in the public concerns of the country,—what, I might ask, has been the leading feature of these eventful years? My public life began nearly with the commencement of that revolutionary effort, of which the almost avowed object was the subversion of every civilized community in the world; and of which the mighty means, physical and moral, appeared, for a long time, but too adequate to the end.

Before this dreadful scourge the most extensive monarchies, and the most ancient republics, the greatest and proudest states, as well as the most humble and unoffending, the widely spread empire of Austria, and the little republic of St. Marino; the military kingdom of Prussia, and the peaceful republics of Switzerland, equally bowed their heads.—Amidst this devastation alike of all that was most stately and all that was most humble, one edifice alone stood firm and erect, affording at once a refuge to the fallen, and succour to those, who though broken and scattered by the storm, had still, like the gallant Spaniards, the courage to brave its desolating fury. Well, gentlemen, was that unassailable bulwark distinguished for its superior size and dimensions;—by the greater number of its garrison; or by its position commanding a far greater range of territory? Certainly not. In all those respects, many which had fallen were far superior; but it was a fortress so happily put together, so strongly connected in all its parts, so wonderfully combining all the means of internal security and external defence, that its gallant garrison was able to defy the power which had laid waste the civilized world. That fortress, Gentlemen, was our country, and the secret of all its strength and greatness; the sacred cement which binds together that impregnable work, is the British Constitution. To that constitution the people of England are, I trust, all equally attached and devoted, however, as freemen, we may sometimes honestly differ as to the best mode of practically applying it in the detailed administration of our

public concerns. But, after it has withstood so many storms, after it has enabled us to overcome so many dangers and difficulties from within, and to repel so many assaults from without, during the last thirty years, I cannot believe that a sober and reflecting people will easily be seduced to attempt any great and undefined change in the structure of the fabric itself. When men deal in loose and general declamation upon such a subject; when they glibly talk of the most difficult and fearful question which human ingenuity can conceive, and the most intricate which human wisdom can investigate—the formation of a new, or the entire re-modelling of the old constitution, in any country—as of a plain, self-evident proposition; I own that I feel very little respect for their understandings; or, if I am compelled to acknowledge their intelligence, I can only do so at the price of assuming (what I fear is too often the case), that they themselves have very little respect for the understandings of those to whom they address such observations. Least of all would they be found applicable to our own constitution, the work of the accumulated experience of ages, favoured by chance and circumstances, and progressively improved and matured by the cautious wisdom of all the great legislators and statesmen, who have served and adorned this happy country. But, in the logic of these wholesale reformers, you would suppose that the British Constitution was something, the merits or defects of which might be exactly measured by a rule and compass, or determined by a comparison with some universally acknowledged, and long ascertained standard of perfection! If a difference existed between us as to the relative distance, by two distinct roads, to any given point, a simple admeasurement of both would settle this difference for ever. If we wanted to know the exact weight, or the precise degree of fineness, of that splendid Vase (the selection of which does so much honour to your taste), a pair of scales, and a crucible would enable us accurately to determine both those points. But where are the scales by which you would weigh the British Constitution? where is the crucible in which you would venture to melt it down? I do not say that, like this Vase, it is without a flaw, or a blemish; but I do maintain, be those flaws and blemishes what they may, it is still the best condition of civil society which has ever yet existed in the world;—that, in which life, and liberty, and property are most secure, in which industry is best protected and rewarded, and in which talent and virtue are most promoted and most frequently attain their fair share of honour, ascendancy, and influence in the State. It is by these tests, Gentlemen,

and not by any preconceived theory, or any imaginary standard of political perfection, that I would recommend to you to try the constitution under which we live. It is somewhat a homely saying, but one to which, perhaps, on a convivial occasion, I may be allowed to refer—that 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating.' So I say of the constitution. Let us have no new cooks, no new receipt books, greatly altering either its present ingredients, or the due proportion of each. At least let us cling to our old English diet, till they can shew us some other people habitually faring better, and permanently thriving faster than ourselves. I mistrust those who make it almost the business of their lives to inculcate an opposite doctrine. I neither envy them the task of incessantly labouring to persuade the people, that they ought not to be contented, or to depreciate their own country in the estimation of other states. I leave to their unhappy tempers the enjoyment of the pitiful satisfaction of pointing out imaginary or incurable imperfections, and of suggesting visionary and unattainable improvements. Perhaps you have heard much lately of these imperfections, and of these improvements. Hear as much as you please. But let me entreat of you before you decide, to look well to all the possible consequences of the changes which are proposed, and above all, to weigh well, against the uncertain benefits which are held out to you, the certainty of what you are called upon to give up as the price of these innovations. Is it not rather the more prudent course to preserve those blessings, which the constitution, as it now exists, has secured to those who have gone before us? And if it be, let us feel contented—and try to inculcate in others that feeling to maintain the institutions and establishments, which we have received from our forefathers. This appears to me the safe line of an Englishman's duty. It is one which exposes him to no risk, by which he can incur no reproach, and by which, I conscientiously believe, he will afford himself the best chance of leaving England what he found it,—and what long, very long, may it continue to be—to his children, and children's children, the best and richest inheritance of freedom and happiness in this world.

Gentlemen, having adverted to the immense exertions made by this country for the restoration of peace, and the settlement of the Continent, it is with great grief that I must add, that its peace, there is too much reason to apprehend, is again about to be interrupted. The most anxious endeavours of this country have not been wanting to prevent an occurrence, which, in the present state of the world, may lead to such fearful consequences. The Parliament of this

country will soon have an opportunity of judging of the conduct of the Government at this crisis. I have no doubt that you will find that the same men who were so properly alive to the honour of the British name, during the late war, have not compromised it on the present occasion.—Without anticipating the decision of Parliament, we can have no difficulty, as Englishmen, in forming our opinion of the grounds on which the attack upon Spain has hitherto been justified. I am not prepared to contend that France, from its vicinity, might not have found in the proceedings of the Spanish Government, and the disturbances in Spain contiguous to her own frontier, reasons for vigilance, and jealousy, and precaution;—possibly, grounds for strong remonstrance: and, if explanation and satisfaction were refused,—whilst her own institutions and internal security were endangered by the conduct of Spain,—the care of that security would have justified, if it could not be otherwise provided for, her having recourse to war. But France does not rest her aggression on these grounds. In common with the late Congress at Verona, she claims the right to interfere, not for the safety of France, but for the purpose of deciding in Spain by foreign bayonets, what share of the public power of that kingdom shall belong to the monarchical, and what to the popular branch of her institutions;—or rather that there shall be no popular institutions, except such as Ferdinand the Seventh may be pleased to bestow upon his subjects. The principle of this doctrine not only forms no part, but is utterly subversive of the law of nations:—a principle as revolutionary as any which was ever promulgated in the wildest excesses of the French revolution. By what authority are all the Independent States of the world to be placed under the perpetual guardianship of this new court of wards lately erected at Verona? Who gave it a right to take other States into its tutelary protection, to manage, or to interfere in, their internal concerns, and to treat them as in a state of political minority and incapacity? Who is to decide when that minority and incapacity commence, when they terminate, and by what criterion a nation is either at one time to be deprived of, or at another intrusted again with, the management of its own estate and internal concerns? Such a system, Gentlemen, never can be recognized by independent States, and the moment it was avowed, in respect to Spain, all the sympathies of England were awakened in favour of that country. If there must be a struggle, I trust it will end in the establishment of her independance, and of a Government of rational freedom in that fine portion of Europe.—I trust it will end in the disavowal, by all Governments, of those prin-

ciples which are so dangerous to the peace and independance of all nations:—and lastly, from my sincere love of peace, from my great anxiety that nothing should occur to interrupt the growing prosperity of this country, do I ardently pray, that her good offices and influence in Europe may be effectually exerted for these great ends, without our being compelled, either in vindication of our own honour, or in defence of our own essential interests, again to embark in war.

Gentlemen, I have detained you too long. Once more accept my most heartfelt thanks for all the honours and all the kindnesses which you have heaped upon me. That I have deserved your confidence I do not presume to think—that I have not disgraced it, I feel certain in my own conscience, and not less so in the cordiality of your approbation.

No. V.

Mr. Huskisson's Speech at the Public Meeting, held at Freemasons' Hall, on the 18th June, 1824, for Erecting a Monument to the late James Watt; the Earl of Liverpool in the Chair.

Mr. Huskisson said:—

My Lord:—A task has been assigned to me at this meeting, which, I am fully aware, would have been far more ably and successfully executed by some one of those who have done me the honour to put into my hands the resolution with which I shall conclude. Several of those gentlemen had an advantage, which I cannot boast, that of having been personally acquainted with the late Mr. Watt, of having enjoyed his confidence and friendship, and of having observed, more nearly than myself, the application and progress of those wonderful discoveries, and scientific inventions, by which he has so greatly benefited his country and the world.

But, Gentlemen, however ill qualified I may be fully to appreciate the merits of Mr. Watt—however inadequate I feel myself to do justice to my own sentiments in this respect—I cannot but be gratified that I have a public opportunity to bear my humble acknowledgment of gratitude for his services, and of respect for his memory.

Gentlemen:—whether, abstracting ourselves for a moment from all considerations of country, we look as men to the benefits which Mr. Watt's inventions have imparted, and are still imparting, to the whole race of man; or whether, as members of that great and powerful community of which he was a member, we confine ourselves to contemplate the special benefits which he conferred upon this country,—his great discoveries must stand equally entitled to our highest admiration. As Englishmen, we cannot behold the results produced by his genius, without a lively sense of joy that we belong to the same country to which he belonged, and without an individual feeling of gratitude that he lived at a time which allows us all to participate in the benefits which he was the selected instrument, under Providence, of introducing among mankind.

If, Gentlemen, there be any individual who can doubt whether Mr. Watt be entitled to rank in the first class of the benefactors of mankind, that individual, let him belong to what station of society he may, has, I think, not justly estimated the influence of improvements in physical and chemical science upon the moral condition of society. I apprehend no man can doubt the beneficial effect of that influence, more or less, in all civilized countries. But, in my view of the subject, there is no portion of the globe, however remote, where the name and flag of England are known, where commerce has carried her sails, and begun to introduce the arts of civilization, which does not derive some advantage from Mr. Watt's discoveries. The economy and abridgment of labour, the perfection and rapidity of manufacture, the cheap and almost indefinite multiplication of every article which suits the luxury, the convenience, or the wants of mankind, are all so many means of creating, in men even but little advanced from the savage state, a taste for improvement; of raising in their bosoms a feeling of new wants and new desires; of showing them the possibility of satisfying those wants and those desires; and thereby of calling into action the most powerful stimulant, and steady motive, to advancement in the scale of the civilized world. Are not the remote islands of the Pacific Ocean become a happy proof of the truth of this position? The same race which, less than half a century ago, murdered and devoured our intrepid but unfortunate navigator, Captain Cook, have, within that short period, become acquainted with many of the comforts of life, and made a greater progress, perhaps, towards improvement, than remains for them to make, in order to entitle themselves to be admitted into the rank of civilized nations. Much of this happy change may, I grant,

be ascribed to the benevolent and indefatigable exertions of the ministers of Christianity; but if these islanders be now clothed in the productions of English industry,—if they have adopted our woollens and our linens, instead of their own rude dress, or rather no dress,—if in their habitations are to be found many useful articles of English manufacture, instead of their own barbarous utensils, let it not be supposed that the increased facility of supplying their wants has not been one powerful means of exciting their desire to procure these enjoyments. If the Steam Engine be the most powerful instrument in the hands of man, to alter the face of the physical world, it operates, at the same time, as a powerful moral lever in forwarding the great cause of civilization. We cannot, therefore, recall to our recollection the invention of the Steam Engine, and follow that invention through all its consequences, without feeling the beneficial influence of this discovery upon all nations, from those most advanced, to those which have made the least progress, in the arts and refinements of life.

The benefits which this discovery has conferred upon our own country, as they are more extensive, are also more obvious. If this were the proper place, and if I were not afraid of trespassing too long upon your time, I could trace those benefits in their detailed progress and operation. I could show how much they have contributed not only to advance personal comfort and public wealth, by affording to industrious millions the facility of providing for their individual wants, by means which directly conduce to the general power and greatness of the state, but also to the general diffusion of a spirit of improvement, a thirst for instruction, and an emulation to apply it to purposes of practical utility, even in the humblest classes of the community. But it cannot be necessary to enter upon so wide a range with the enlightened meeting which I have now the honour of addressing. Looking back, however, to the demands which were made upon the resources of this country during the late war, perhaps it is not too much to say, at least it is my opinion, that those resources might have failed us, before that war was brought to a safe and glorious conclusion, but for the creations of Mr. Watt, and of others moving in the same career, by whose discoveries those resources were so greatly multiplied and increased. It is, perhaps, not too much to say, that, but for the vast accession thus imperceptibly made to the general wealth of this empire, we might have been driven to sue for peace, before, in the march and progress of events, Nelson had put forth the last energies of his naval genius

at Trafalgar, or, at any rate, before Wellington had put the final seal to the security of Europe at Waterloo. If, therefore, we are now met to consider of placing a monument to the memory of Mr. Watt beside the monuments of those who fell in the splendid victories of the last war, let it not be said that there is no connexion between the services of this modest and unobtrusive benefactor of his country, and the triumphs of the heroes which those monuments are destined to commemorate.

I own that the monument about to be proposed to Mr. Watt appears to me to be one of those acts of public duty, to which every Englishman of a cultivated mind, following the munificent example of the sovereign, should be anxious to contribute. In doing so, he will indulge not only a feeling of gratitude, but the cheering hope of exciting a spirit of emulation in others; and an honest pride, in reflecting that he belongs to the same community of which this highly-gifted genius was a member, and to the age in which he lived.

Long as I have already detained the meeting, I cannot sit down without adding one or two short remarks. It has been often said, that many of the great discoveries in science are due to accident; but it was well remarked by the President of the Royal Society, that this cannot be the case with the principal discovery of Mr. Watt. Long and scientific research and application alone could have enabled him to create his Steam Engine. Again, it has frequently happened that those philosophers, who have made brilliant and useful discoveries, by watching the phenomena of the physical world, the combinations of chemistry, or the mysterious workings of organic life, have only been able to turn their discoveries to the purpose of averting evils threatening, and often destroying, the precarious tenure of human existence. Thus Franklin disarmed the thunderbolt, and conducted it innocuous through our buildings, and close to our fire-sides —thus Jenner stripped a loathsome and destructive disease of its virulence, and rendered it harmless of devastation—thus the present President of the Royal Society (of whom it is difficult to say whether abstract science or practical life has been most benefited by his discoveries) sent the safety lamp into our mines to save (as its name implies) their useful inhabitants from the awful explosion of the fire-damp. But the discovery of Mr. Watt went further: he subdued and regulated the most terrific power in the universe,—that power which, by the joint operation of pressure and heat, probably produces those tremendous convulsions of the earth, which in a

moment subvert whole cities, and almost change the face of the inhabited globe. This apparently ungovernable power Mr. Watt reduced to a state of such perfect organization and discipline—if I may use the expression—that it may now be safely manœuvred and brought into irresistible action—irresistible, but still regulated, measured, and ascertained—or lulled into the most complete and secure repose, at the will of man, and under the guidance of his feeble hand. Thus one man directs it into the bowels of the earth, to tear asunder its very elements, and bring to light its hidden treasures; another places it upon the surface of the waters, to control the winds of heaven, to stem the tides, to check the currents, and defy the waves of the ocean; a third, perhaps, and a fourth, are destined to apply this mighty power to other purposes, still unthought of and unsuspected, but leading to consequences, possibly, not less important than those which it has already produced.

It is, Gentlemen, in the contemplation of the wonderful, but most beneficial, change which this single invention has already effected in the world—in the anticipation of the still further changes which it may effect—that I feel most forcibly my own want of power to do justice to my sentiments on this occasion, and that I gladly relieve myself from any further prosecution of the attempt by proposing to you the following Resolution:

"That those benefits, conferred by Mr. Watt on the whole civi-
"lized world, have been most experienced by his own country, which
"owes a tribute of national gratitude to a man, who has thus ho-
"noured her by his genius, and promoted her well-being by his
"discoveries."

No. VI.

Mr. Huskisson's Speech at Liverpool, on his Re-election, February 5, 1828.

[*Referred to in Biographical Memoir*, p. 160.]

The re-election of Mr. Huskisson was moved by Mr. Bolton, and seconded by Mr. Gladstone. After Mr. Wallace Currie had addressed the meeting,

Mr. Huskisson came forward, and spoke as follows:—

I hope I shall be allowed, before I proceed to the topics which have been so ably adverted to by my honourable friend (if he will permit me to call him so), Mr. Wallace Currie, and by my honourable

friend who seconded my nomination, to express my unfeigned regret at being placed again before them as a candidate. I have been most anxious to spare this great town the inconvenience of an election. I assure you, that it was through no wish, on my part, to obtain a higher official situation, that I am under the necessity of appearing again before you.

When the administration of Lord Liverpool ceased to exist, from the unfortunate visitation of Providence which befel him, I might, perhaps, have had it in my power, from my lamented friend then placed at the head of his Majesty's councils—a friend dear to Liverpool as to myself—I might have had it in my power, had I looked to personal gratification, or to the ordinary objects of ambition, to have asked for a higher situation—higher, at least, in public estimation and in official responsibility, than the one I then held. I am now speaking in the presence of several gentlemen, to whom, at the time, I did not hesitate to express the satisfaction which I felt that, as President of the Board of Trade, it had been my good fortune, by diligence, by assiduity, and by the laborious discharge of the duties of that situation, to merit some degree of approbation from this enlightened community; and to attract some degree of confidence from the community at large. At the same time, whilst I met with the encouragement to which I have adverted, I have also met with much obloquy and opposition. I was naturally anxious to clear myself and my measures from the imputation cast upon them; and I felt myself bound to defend and stand by my official post, as long as it was an object of attack, not only in the support of the measures themselves, but of my own character and personal honour.

Therefore, when I might have fairly solicited, on the part of friendship, and on the part of long connexion in public life, a higher official situation, I declined to do it; and, amongst the other motives which influenced me, I felt reluctance, a reluctance which I shall at all times feel, to put this great town to the inconvenience of a public election, and thus interrupt, in some degree, the ordinary course of industry, and those pursuits in which the freemen of Liverpool, to the benefit of their country and themselves, are habitually engaged. Therefore, I can safely state to you, that if I have since attained to a higher situation in the councils of the Crown, I neither sought the situation, nor could I by possibility foresee the melancholy occurrence which has been the occasion of my being called to it.

It is certainly necessary for me to claim your indulgence on the present occasion; first, because in the impaired state of my health, I

may not be able to address you so fully as I could wish; and, secondly, because I can assure you, that, however much I may have endeavoured to steel myself against painful associations, I feel myself almost overwhelmed by them, when I consider the place from which I am speaking, and the event which has brought me before you. That voice which, years ago, was raised from this hustings, which you have so often listened to with pleasure, with admiration, and, allow me to say, with benefit and instruction, is now mute for ever. That heart-stirring power, which, in 1812, at the moment of the greatest alarm which this country ever knew, roused the energies, not of the town of Liverpool only, but of the whole country, to meet the dangers and overcome the difficulties which then beset it—which dispelled the fears of the timid, reclaimed the desponding, and revived the hopes of thousands, then doubtful as to the possibility of bringing to a successful issue the great contest in which we were engaged—which, above all, appealed to the good sense of Englishmen, against the insidious designs of men desirous, from the pressure of temporary difficulties, to yield to the demands and threats of an apparently irresistible foe, to which, if the country had yielded, it would at this moment have been neither in a state of security, nor of peace, nor of honour—that animated and exalted spirit is now lost to the country for ever. That all-persuading and consistent eloquence, which, when disaffection and resistance to legitimate authority seemed to spread itself over this country, inculcated reverence to the laws and attachment to constitutional freedom, as distinguished from licentiousness, and taught the value of that union of interests between the crown and the subject, which constitutes at once the stability of the crown and the happiness of the people, is now for ever silent. Yet, though now hushed in the grave, let the recollection of that eloquence impress upon us, that by this union the power of this great state has arisen to what it is;—that by this union and power it was that my lamented friend was enabled to claim for this country that station and authority in the councils of civilized Europe, which gave it a right to watch over the peace of Europe, and to interpose for the preservation of the liberty and independence of other nations;—and that it was by that happy union of constitutional freedom and monarchical protection, which it was the honour and glory of my lamented friend always to uphold and maintain, that the country not only sustained its energies through the war, but was raised into the character of the arbiter of peace and distributor of happiness to mankind.

You are all aware of the long political and private friendship by which I was bound to that highly-gifted and much distinguished individual. You are all aware that the principles by which my lamented friend conducted himself in public life, are also those which have been the guide of my conduct. And I can only say, that having looked to the freemen of Liverpool as the guardians of those principles, if they are now no longer to be adhered to, I request you, in consistency, to dismiss me from these hustings, for certainly I shall no longer be a fit representative for you. But I know that the principles I have acted upon are those which animate the great mass of the enlightened population of this country; and those principles must, I believe, be the guide of its future councils, if the country is to maintain its present station amongst the nations of the world.

When, by one of those dispensations of Providence to which we must all bow, however grievous and afflictive, the sovereign and the people were deprived of the services of my lamented friend, I was endeavouring to recruit my impaired health in a distant part of the continent. I could not witness, but I well knew, the universal sorrow that event excited in this country, from the highest to the lowest,—from the monarch on the throne to the humblest peasant in his dominions; and I can state that, in the countries through which I passed on my return to England, I found the same sympathy and the same regret which actuated the bosoms of the people of this country, as if they felt that mankind had lost a benefactor.

On my return to England, I found that it was the most anxious desire of my Sovereign that the councils of the country should continue to be directed in the same spirit which had actuated my right honourable friend, and his lamented predecessor, Lord Liverpool. If I had then consulted my own ease and comfort, or that which was more valuable to me, my own health, I should, in prudence, and in deference to the advice of others and the admonitions of my own family, have retired from public life; admonitions strengthened by the fact, that in six months the country had witnessed the fall of two of the greatest statesmen of the age, both carried off by the anxiety and labour of public life, and both my juniors, though only by a few months. It would, therefore, have been gratifying to me, having, however little deserving of it, obtained some degree of credit from my country for my past exertions, to have taken that opportunity of retiring, rather than to encounter afresh the storms and difficulties of public life, with a frame enfeebled, and a mind of which the energies must be more or less weakened by the decay of physical

strength. But I was told, that if I refused to lend my aid to the public service, there would be no possibility of accomplishing that which I knew to be the wish of the Sovereign, and believed to be for the interest of the State,—that the affairs of the country should continue to be carried on, as far as possible, by the same men, and in the same spirit, as before the loss of Mr. Canning. I therefore did not hesitate, because I felt that when once a man had embarked in public life, when once I had received an assurance of that confidence which had been conferred on me by my constituents at Liverpool, and by a great part of the country, and, above all, when I had received the commands of the Sovereign himself, I felt that I was not at liberty, unless on the ground of public principle or personal honour, to retire from the public service.

My acceptance, therefore, of the office of Secretary of State, rendered it necessary that I should vacate my seat. I then received a requisition unparalleled, I believe, both as to the number and respectability of the persons who signed it, requesting me again to offer my services to those whom, for some years, I had been proud to call my constituents. I well knew that the representation of Liverpool, in itself no sinecure, would be a considerable addition to my labours. But when I remembered the kindness with which they originally received and have since treated me, I could not hesitate to obey their call. On that occasion, the circumstance occurred, which has been alluded to by my honourable friend, Mr. Currie. Some friends were kind enough to express a wish that I might not be called on to attend at the election. They will do me the justice to remember that I made no such request. Whatever might have been the state of my health, unless I had been altogether unfit to undertake the journey, I should have felt it a positive duty to have been present. Circumstances of recent occurrence render it still more necessary that I should present myself now before you. I am sure that every one will feel the difficulty in which I am placed, standing, as I do, in the double character of a candidate for the representation of the people, and of a Minister of the Crown. I will endeavour to steer such a course as to reconcile, as far as possible, what I owe to both these characters.

When the Administration of Lord Liverpool was brought to a close, difficulties arose in the formation of a new Government unforeseen by my lamented friend, who received his Majesty's commands to form an Administration. In those difficulties Mr. Canning found it necessary to apply to some distinguished individuals belonging to a party to which he had, on many questions, been op-

posed. But since the restoration of peace, my lamented friend's mind and my own had been directed to those measures which the return of peace suggested, with a view to renovate the resources and improve the strength of the country. The differences which had existed among parties, in a considerable degree went into abeyance. When, therefore, my friend applied to a noble peer, one of his earliest and most constant private friends, the Earl of Carlisle, and, through him, opened a communication with the Marquis of Lansdowne and others, it was on the principle distinctly understood, and openly avowed, that their accession was to be without any departure from the principles which had governed the councils of the country under the Administration of Lord Liverpool. The Catholic question was to remain in a free and open state in the Cabinet. It was considered that there was likely to be no serious difference on any other point. I hope I have fairly stated the formation of what has been called a coalition, but what I think was rather a fusion, which placed all party feelings in oblivion. I hope I may be allowed to say that there was not the smallest surrender, either on my part, or on the part of those who had before been in office with me, of any one doctrine or principle they had ever maintained.

Very soon after the accession of the noble individuals I have alluded to I was obliged to leave the country. In consequence of the loss of my lamented friend, the Cabinet was reconstructed: but still there was not the smallest change of policy. Here I feel that it would be baseness and injustice were I not explicitly to declare that, from the moment of my return to this country, till the dissolution of that Government, there never was a Cabinet in which I sat with more satisfaction, in which there was less of difference, or a more universal desire to cultivate a perfect harmony. Men of more spotless integrity and high honour, of more moderate and consistent principles, more straight-forward and honourable, than Lord Lansdowne, Lord Carlisle, and Mr. Tierney, I have never met with in the discussion and management of public affairs.

Events took place in December, for which neither my noble friends nor myself were responsible, but which necessarily weakened the confidence of the public in the Administration. Gentlemen are aware, that in that month his Majesty had occasion to request a nobleman, who had formerly been in the Cabinet, to place himself at the head of the Government. From whatever circumstances that arose, it necessarily weakened the confidence placed in the Administration. The state of our foreign relations made it then highly desirable that

the Government should not be exhibited in the eyes of foreigners as one possessing only a temporary character, the effect of which would be uncertainty and weakness. Under these circumstances my friend, Lord Goderich, than whom a man of more spotless virtue does not exist, felt it his duty to wait upon his Majesty, and lay before him the existing state of the Administration. The King, feeling that he owed it to his people and to the great interests then, as still, in a critical state,—interests connected with the peace of Europe,—not to lose a moment in preventing the Government of this country from being longer viewed as unsettled and provisional,—sent for the Duke of Wellington. The Duke, I can say, from my certain knowledge, was most reluctant to undertake the task assigned him. His earnest wish was to remain in the discharge of that important trust for which he felt himself most competent. He felt it, however, his duty, in the then circumstances of the country, to obey the commands of his Sovereign. I know that no exclusion whatever of any men, or set of men, was desired by our liberal and enlightened Monarch. It so happened, that the Duke of Wellington, after communicating with one other individual, whom no man would deny to have rendered, by his distinguished talents and by his industry, great services to his country, I mean Mr. Peel,—after offering to him a situation in the Government,—his Grace had a communication with me. The communication made to me was in the most general terms. I was asked, if there was any thing which should preclude me from taking a part in the new Government of the Duke of Wellington. To such an application I could only reply, that if the Government was such as satisfied the view I took of the interests of the country, and provided such arrangements were made in its construction as offered a guarantee that the principles which I approved would not be departed from, I individually stood free from any party engagements which should prevent my taking a share in such Government. I went to Lord Lansdowne and told him what had taken place between myself and the Duke of Wellington. Not knowing what was the Duke's intention, I implored Lord Lansdowne, that if any communication should be made to him from the Duke, he would consider well before he negatived the proposition. From what passed, I had reason to apprehend that if any communication were made to Lord Lansdowne, he would feel himself under insuperable difficulties in accepting it; and I felt that it would depend on the nature of that communication, and on the principles which should be adopted, whether I should not pursue the same course. As I had no hand in forming the Adminis-

tration, I do not know why the Duke of Wellington went to one individual and not to another. His Grace made, however, an offer to Lord Carlisle to remain in the councils of the country, in the office which he then filled. Lord Carlisle, having from his earliest appearance in public life acted with his party, intimated that he could not remain unless they also remained. Under the circumstances, I should have acted in a similar manner. But I am not in those circumstances. If I may use the terms better forgotten, I might say I never did belong to the Whig party. Had I then retired—all other matters being satisfactorily arranged—because the Whigs retired, I should have been identified with a party to which I did not belong. At the same time I must say, that there are no two men in the country with whom I should feel more proud and happy to act, than Lord Lansdowne and Lord Carlisle.

In my interviews with the Duke of Wellington, I felt myself called upon to look to three things—first, to measures; secondly, to the guarantees for those measures; and thirdly, what I have as much at heart as any thing else, that nothing should be done by me inconsistent with my attachment and fidelity to my lamented friend, Mr. Canning. As to measures, I first looked naturally to the foreign policy of the country, and I looked also to the commerce, the internal industry, and the colonial interests of the country. I was also bound to see that that question, which, with whatever difference of opinion there might be upon it, I think of vast importance to the permanent peace and security of the country, and to its strength in war—I mean the Catholic question—should stand unprejudiced in the new arrangement.

If any man can doubt my sincerity, let him look at such men as Lord Dudley, Lord Palmerston, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Lamb, whose continuance in office is the most satisfactory of all guarantees, that the general principles of our foreign policy and commercial system would remain unchanged, and that Ireland would be governed with the strictest impartiality in respect to the Catholic question.

Without overrating any little confidence which the country might be disposed to place in me, I say, that if I and my friends had retired, the Government would have been less powerful, than it was likely to be by the fusion which has taken place. These are considerations which every public man is bound to attend to. I am not sure, for instance, that if the Minister of Foreign Affairs in this country had been changed, the consequence might not have been such a misapprehension as might have led to a serious misunderstanding, if not to war in Europe.

I now come to the questions which have been put by my honourable friend Mr. Currie: and first, with regard to the Corn Bill. This is, no doubt, a difficult and complicated question, but it is most assuredly my intention to adhere to the principles of the Corn Bill of last year, and to support such a bill as will satisfy the just wishes of the country, and at the same time not prejudice the lawful interest of the landowners. Further than this I can not now in prudence say. In respect to the Assessed taxes I may state that, in the year 1824, an attempt was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to introduce one rule for levying those taxes throughout the kingdom. So active an opposition was raised to that proposal, that the measure was abandoned, though the principle was still held to be good, and I shall certainly feel it my duty to bring the subject under consideration of Government, to obtain an equalization of the assessments. In regard to the Finance Committee, it will be one of the first duties which will devolve upon me, if I shall have the honour to be returned by you to Parliament, to give my vote for the formation of such a Committee; and to take care, in conjunction with my colleagues, and especially Mr. Peel, that the members of it are selected from all the great parties, looking only to those who have shown the greatest aptitude for business, the greatest attention to the public interest, and the greatest desire to bring down the expenditure of the country to the lowest possible amount consistent with the public interest, the national honour, and the safety of our foreign possessions.

My honourable friend who seconded the nomination has alluded to the two subjects of the renewal of the charters of the two important companies, the East-India Company and the Bank of England. To these subjects I shall endeavour to apply the general principles which I have long professed, at the same time considering the claims which those great companies fairly have upon the country. I am strongly opposed to monopolies of any kind, and think it highly proper that institutions which have risen up under different circumstances, should undergo a modification suited to the changing circumstances of the country; and that the immense capital, skill, and intelligence of the people should have a fair field for their employment.

I fear I have detained you far too long, but it is much better that I should trespass on your patience, than that I should labour under a suspicion of having violated my principles. I am now in an advanced period of a life spent diligently and laboriously in making myself useful to the nation to which I belong. I have endeavoured, whenever it was in my power, and especially since the conclusion of

the war, to advance, gradually, the interests of the country, not by rash innovation, but by steady and sober improvement. There remain still errors to correct, and imperfections to palliate or remove. I shall bear in view the principles by which I have hitherto been governed. If I am successful, I trust I shall not forfeit your good opinion: if I fail, it is only because failure is incident to human infirmity. It is not my desire to withdraw now from the public service, if it be thought that, from my long experience and habits of business, I may be of any utility to the country; but if I remain in office, I shall pursue the same course of public duty by which I have hitherto been guided, regardless of the clamour and obloquy which have been cast upon me.

I have only one word more to say to you. I trust that, amongst the many public avocations which claim my time and attention, I have not been unnecessarily deficient in attention to your local concerns, and to the great interests which connect the local improvements of the town with the general interests of the country. I have endeavoured, as far as was consistent with my principles and duty, to follow up the views which you yourselves entertain. I shall continue so to do whilst you honour me with a continuance of your confidence, with the same impartiality I have hitherto endeavoured to preserve; and I trust, with the diligence and assiduity and assistance of my honourable friend, Mr. Wainewright, to whom you have committed the task of assisting me, that I shall continue to discharge my duty. I have only to thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me. How far my address may be satisfactory, I cannot anticipate; but if I have forfeited my claim to your confidence and support, however mortified I may be at the circumstance, I shall withdraw from public life, and enjoy, in retirement, the opportunity of recovering that health, which my honourable friend, Mr. Currie, has been kind enough to wish me.

After the Rev. Mr. Shepherd had addressed the meeting and nominated Lord Molyneux, and Colonel Williams had seconded the nomination,

Mr. HUSKISSON again came forward, and said:—

Gentlemen:—I shall not, I trust, be considered as obtruding on your indulgence, if I exercise the right which I claimed, at the commencement of these proceedings, to reply to any gentleman who might address you, especially after the observations which have been

made by the two gentlemen whom I must consider my opponents. I have the more reason for hoping that my reply need not detain you long, as the gallant colonel has been pleased to designate the nomination of another candidate by his reverend friend, a farce. The reverend gentleman was very severe on my noble friend at the head of the present administration, for having once, probably inadvertently, made use of the same expression; but I did not expect that the gallant colonel would return the compliment, by telling him that the proceedings of this meeting, and the nomination which he had proposed to the freemen, was so much waste of time and a mere empty farce. I must congratulate these two brothers of reform, who have so often drawn together with the utmost cordiality on former occasions, on the difference in the views which they have taken on political subjects to-day. So far progress has been made in reforming the reverend gentleman from strange error, as regards the constitution of this country. His honourable friend seems to have retained the good old radical principles on which he and the reverend gentleman formerly acted. My honourable and lamented friend, to-day the object of so much eulogy on the part of the reverend gentleman, was, at one time, just as much the object of his unsparing censure and objurgation. I certainly did consider the reverend gentleman as much a champion of radical reform as the gallant colonel, though he seems not now to carry his principles to the same extent. It is pleasant, indeed, to think, that there are shades of difference between these gentlemen. Thus the gallant colonel, who has just addressed you, would not suffer a minister of the Crown to enjoy a seat in either House of Parliament, a custom which he considers highly unconstitutional. I should be wasting the time of the meeting were I to discuss the doctrine which the gallant colonel has laid down, that no person holding a situation under the Crown ought to sit in Parliament.—[Colonel Williams—"It is the language of the act of Parliament."]—I will not stop to quarrel about the fact asserted by the honourable gentleman. It cannot be the spirit and true meaning of the law. The honourable colonel has, very little to the purpose of the present meeting, gone back to those lamentable times in which no man's family was safe in his house, no property was secure, no peaceful industry certain of being protected against the interruptions of lawless violence; and he denounces, as acts of tyranny, those measures brought forward by a late noble friend of mine, to correct those monstrous evils, and characterises that noble person and my

lamented friend Mr. Canning, as fiends for having supported those measures. But, if there be any man who recollects the state of the country in November 1819, before those acts were passed, and compares it with what it was in four short months afterwards, when they had rescued a deluded people from the influence of an incendiary press, I will say that the man who deliberately states that those measures were not necessary, must have a mind differently constituted from mine, or must have looked to results which I will not describe. I think that the reverend gentleman is as much an impugner of the measures to which I refer as the gallant colonel; but as the reverend gentleman has, on the present occasion, eulogised one of the authors of those measures, and has lamented that he is not alive to hear his praises, I must infer that the reverend gentleman has since had the good fortune to follow a different school of politics from that in which the gallant colonel, with more consistency, seems to have persevered. He has been an apprentice, if I may use the expression, to some of those more temperate Whigs, upon whose mitigated views he has conformed his language in addressing you to-day. To some of them, much to his own benefit, the reverend gentleman must have served an apprenticeship. I am satisfied that if Mr. Hyde, of whose activity in surcharging I have heard so much, had been aware of the fact, he would have surcharged the reverend gentleman as an apprentice to these managers; leaving to the reverend gentleman to appeal against the charge. And I am convinced, should the case be submitted to the twelve judges, they would think it one in which they had better grounds for confirming the assessment, than in most of the other cases of apprenticeship which are to be reserved for their decision from this town. Now, in this new character the reverend gentleman has forgotten many of the circumstances of the case to which he alluded. He asks me, whether I do not recollect the virulence, the resistance, the sneers, with which I was assailed by the Ultra Tories, on the occasion of my introducing the Silk bill? To be sure I do. But who were the other parties who opposed that measure? Was Mr. Williams, the member for Lincoln, one of those *Ultra* Tories, as it is the fashion to call them? Was Mr. Baring, the member for Taunton, another of those *Ultra* Tories? Was Mr. Ellice, the member for Coventry, who I know acted under the instructions of his constituents, also an *Ultra* Tory? The honourable and reverend gentleman says, he is very anxious to warn me of the perils of the

situation in which I am placed. I hope I am old enough to take care of myself. I trust that he will allow me to take my own character into my own keeping. I am sure I cannot commit it to the joint keeping of himself and his gallant friend; for, since the new lights which have burst on the reverend gentleman, they differ too much on public matters to agree in the management of such a trust. But he alludes to a paragraph in a newspaper, and charges the present Government with interfering to change the editor. I deny the fact, be it asserted by who it may. No member of his Majesty's cabinet had communication, either directly or indirectly, with the party preferring this complaint, to the effect which has been stated.

The reverend gentleman, in a speech which became his calling, which became, still more, his years, and which was rendered peculiarly impressive by his referring, more than once, to the sacred volume, has arraigned me for the unchristian offence of a relenting disposition; for having so entirely forgotten the precepts of the religion which we both profess, as to think that personal differences, if they have existed, and the resentments of party, ought not to be eternal. I am told that I have united myself with the bitter personal enemies of Mr. Canning. Why does not the reverend gentleman tell us by name who they are? Will the reverend gentleman show me an instance in which public men, acting upon his doctrines, have cherished and perpetuated those ebullitions of momentary warmth, to the exclusion of all future co-operation in the public service. But what are the grounds of this irreconcileable difference in the present instance? Does he allude to Mr. Peel? Why, Mr. Brougham, I believe, once said, that if he and Mr. Peel were questioned separately upon fifty different points of national concerns, their answers would, probably, agree in forty-nine. Why, then, should I differ from Mr. Peel more than Mr. Brougham? There is one question on which I lament to differ from my right honourable friend; but I do say, that during the whole time in which I acted with Mr. Peel in Lord Liverpool's administration, there never was a measure which I had occasion to bring forward, in which I had not the good fortune to be supported by him, not coldly and reluctantly, but with a zealous and cordial feeling of co-operation. Why, therefore, should I, who have never had any personal difference with Mr. Peel, refuse to co-operate with him. Then again, with respect to the Duke of Wellington. If there was something which prevented the noble Duke from acting with Mr. Canning, it arose, I really believe, from an unfortunate misunder-

standing. It had no bearing on great public questions, and did not prevent Mr. Canning from advising his Sovereign, after the formation of his administration, again to press the noble Duke to resume the command of the army. I have had the honour of a seat for several years in the same cabinet with that distinguished individual. It is not true, it is the very reverse of truth to affirm, that he gave a constant and vexatious opposition to those measures which it was my public duty to bring forward, and of which Parliament and the country, have approved. With respect to the foreign policy of the country, there never was that difference which the reverend gentleman gratuitously assumes—if there had been any I should have known of it—between Mr. Canning and the Duke of Wellington. Away, therefore, with these objections about my having connected myself with the revilers and vilifiers of the public measures of Mr. Canning, which would have been, in fact, to revile and vilify the Government of which they themselves formed a part. I know the warmth of party feeling and of a party spirit.

It has been my good fortune not to be so much mixed up with these heats and dissensions, as other and greater men who have taken a more leading part in parliamentary strife. I do not consider myself tied down by hereditary distinctions, Whig or Tory, I have looked to such measures as appeared to me calculated to promote the public welfare. For some of these measures, it has been my good fortune to obtain support from both parties. But, if ever there was a public man who would have allowed personal differences to operate as an eternal bar to his serving the Crown, jointly with those whom, under different circumstances, he had been involved in those differences, that man was not Mr. Canning; and I am at a loss to understand, supposing such differences to have existed in my case, which I deny, why they were to prevent me, the grounds of them being allowed, from holding an office to which I have been called by the commands of my Sovereign, when there appeared to me to exist no call of personal or public duty, which made it necessary for me to request to be relieved in that respect.

With respect to the interposition of the British Government in the affairs of Portugal, which has been adverted to, was not the Duke of Wellington a sharer in the councils which advised that interference? But, say my opponents, did he not show himself the enemy of all freedom, when, being in France, he refused to interfere to prevent the massacre of the Protestants at Nismes? Why, if he had so in-

terposed with a purely domestic transaction, which concerned the internal and municipal administration of the French Government, would he not have raised in France a spirit of resistance against such dictation; a spirit which would have roused the tamest, much more the proudest, nation of Europe? Acting on such a principle, France, Catholic France, might interfere in the affairs of the Sister Kingdom, the feuds of whose inhabitants too frequently spring from religious differences. Such is not the object of British interference. Our principle is not to intermeddle in the internal or domestic affairs of any country. The principle which should regulate British interference, is that of keeping the several powers within the limits settled at the pacification of Europe, and to prevent by counsel, good offices, and, if necessary (and only as far as necessary), by our interposition, a recurrence of such a collision as might again cover Europe with bloodshed and desolation.

When, as in the case of Portugal, we are called upon to interfere in the discharge of the obligations of a treaty, if that interference be incidentally called forth in support of free institutions, so much the better. The principle and justification of our interference in the affairs of Greece were, in like manner, to prevent conflictions which might lead to misunderstandings, and derange the repose of Europe. But, in the fair execution of that policy, we are not justified in interposing in the internal concerns of other countries. A great power like England cannot so interfere without violating the soundest principles of international law, and thereby risking the loss of that lofty station, and that commanding influence, which she has acquired, by sustaining a character for impartiality and justice, among the powers of Europe, and which, I trust, as long as I have a share in the councils of the country, it shall never be said that I contributed to cause her to lose.

I must now leave it to the good taste of the reverend gentleman to decide whether he will persist in demanding a poll, unless he has reason to believe that the deserving nobleman whom he has put in nomination is desirous to become a candidate.

After paying some compliments to the character of the noble lord whom Mr. Shepherd had nominated, Mr. Huskisson concluded his reply amidst loud and long continued cheers. No poll having been demanded by the reverend gentleman who nominated Lord Molyneux, the opinion of the meeting was taken by a show of hands, which, with the exception of three or four individuals, was unanimously in favour

of Mr. Huskisson,—a circumstance unprecedented in the annals of Liverpool elections. The right honourable gentleman afterwards briefly returned thanks, and took leave of the burgesses, assuring them, that his return to London being an object of the most pressing necessity, he hoped his hasty departure would not be construed as indicative of any want of personal courtesy to them individually. After giving the right honourable gentleman nine hearty cheers, the meeting separated.

THE END.

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